

On Top Of The News

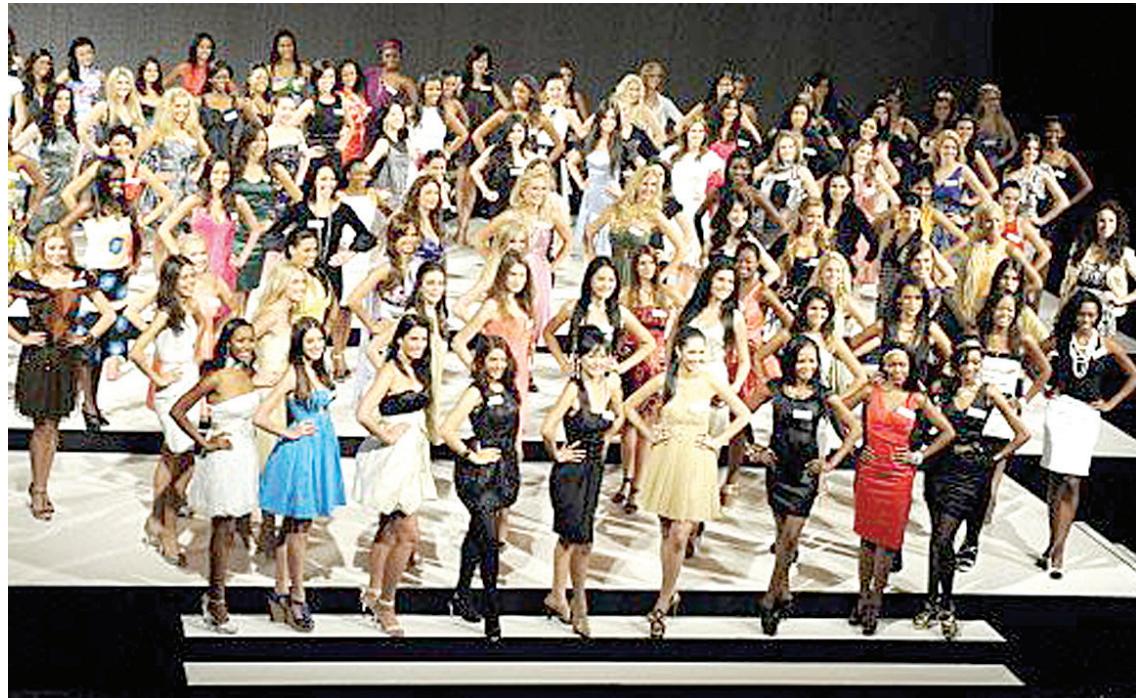
Email: news@arubatoday.com

Website: www.arubatoday.com

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

With Nuraisa Lispier from Aruba

Miss World countdown starts in London



Miss World contestants in London



LONDON — The Miss World whirlwind whipped into London on Monday, with beauty queens from across the globe gathering to kick off the official countdown to next month's grand final in Johannesburg.

The 2009 Miss World Festival

brought together 120 national winners from countries such as India, Thailand, Australia, China and hosts South Africa, to Tahiti, Gibraltar, Curacao and Aruba.

They were at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London's

plush Park Lane to flex their credentials at a charity dinner marking one month until the December 12 final.

"There are so many beautiful Snow Whites here," Yu Sheng, Miss China, told AFP. "I can't say now who is the most beautiful because we perceive people as more beautiful when we know them better."

However, the broadcasting graduate fancies her chances of claiming the crown. "Yes, because there are 1.3 billion people behind me, so I have confidence," the 22-year-old said.

"This is my honour, and I prepared a lot for this competition and I want to deliver the culture of China."

Meanwhile Miss Sierra Leone, who works in television in

China, said support from the people's republic was helping her achieve her goals.

"The Chinese people help me to help the poor people, because that is my dream, to help the poor people in Africa and all over the world," Mariatu Kargbo, 23, told AFP.

The Freetown girl said her homeland had settled down since the 1991-2002 civil war,

but still needed "a lot of help".

"Now a lot of foreigners,

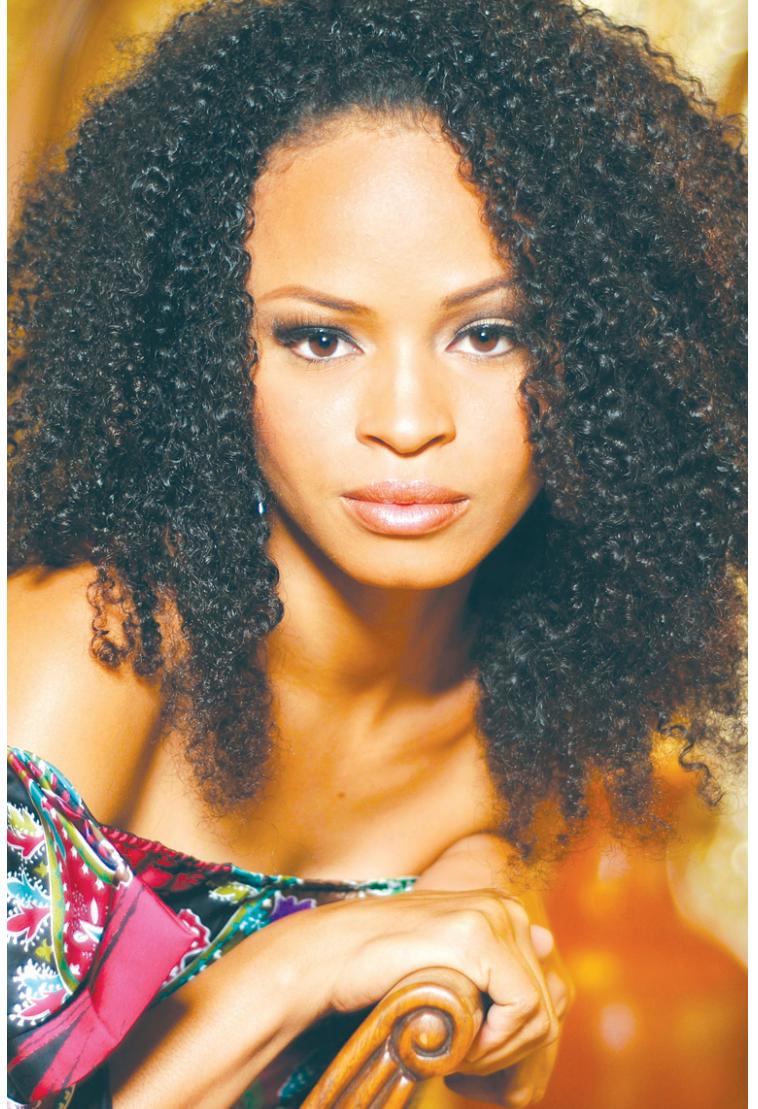
especially the Chinese people, they are a lot in Sierra Leone, doing business there.

"We try to see the kind of things we can do to promote, to help the poor people because people without feet and arms, they cannot work and we can help them to produce and give them something to live."

"My dream is to stand up for them, not only for Sierra Leone, for all the poor people all over the world." □



VIDEO: Miss World countdown starts ahead of SAfrica show



Nuraisa Lispier

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but still needed "a lot of help".

"Now a lot of foreigners,

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Casa Tua Barcelona Downtown open from 11.30am to 10.30pm, Sunday from 5pm to 11pm tel. 588 5695. Casa Tua Palm Beach open from 5pm to 11pm, tel 586 8470

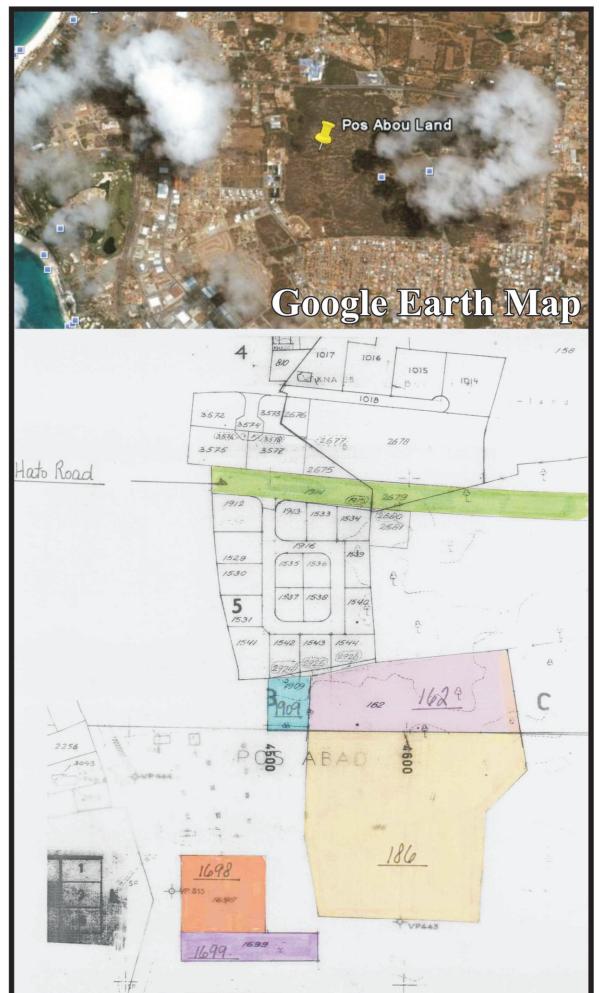
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Everyone loves "the game" at Champions Sports Bar & Restaurant



PALM BEACH - At Champions Sports Bar, lunch and dinner American-style is served alongside beer and cocktails. Champions Sports Bar, a very casual restaurant serving both lunch & dinner, is the perfect location for a casual family dinner or to watch your favorite sports game on one of the 29 TV screens.

Go nuts over a game while you nosh on your burger and fries. Champions offers a place to enjoy food and drinks while watching your favorite sports games. Located at Aruba's Marriott Ocean Club. Pictured are Champions guests enjoying the great food, fun and games. □

Photos by Julia Renfro



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Aruba TODAY
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PwC conducts a Safe Health Day for staffers



PALM BEACH — The local branch of the famed multi-national PricewaterhouseCoopers, hosted a Safe Health Day over the weekend at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa in the lower lobby meeting rooms, organized by Aaron

J. M. Antersijn, Safety & Security Consultant of Security Solutions Consultancy. The Safe Health Day was offered to staff members as an enrichment program and covered a number of interesting topics. "We value the safety and well-being



of our associates and their significant others," explained partner Edsel Lopez, "and for that reason we opted to offer a day dedicated to learning on a subject of concern to all of us."

The day started with Infant & Child CPR, covering Children and Emergencies and Infant CPR. Wives, partners, grandparents, babysitters and all significant others were invited to attend the very informative class.

CPR/First Aid followed, teaching staff members to recognize emergencies.

Some of the topics handled during the interactive morning included deciding to help, personal safety, assessing for response, basic life supporting skills, clearing the airway, breathing, circulation, unresponsive patient, CPR for cardiac arrest, using an AED, control of bleeding, foreign body airway obstruction, and the emotional impact of providing first aid care.

Having digested much of the



information, PwC staffers were then treated to an hour long health assessment class, as they "pulsed" their own condition under the guidance of Antersijn.

The Radisson's culinary team catered a healthy and delicious light lunch just before the Swine Flu prevention seminar began where PwC staff members received the latest information about the pandemic.

A Pilates class de-stressed and relaxed all participants towards the end of the day as teacher Diana Magyaroff led participants through an hour of stretching and breathing. As a surprise, Larimar Spa therapists graced the meeting room with their presence awarding each participant with a soothing chair-massage.

Staffers agreed the seminar was helpful, informative and memorable. The mental preparation for emergencies, drills a better response and delivers improved results, when difficult situations arise. Practice makes perfect, is true in all aspects of life. □

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Aruba swings into holiday season with Fiesta Kibrahacha!



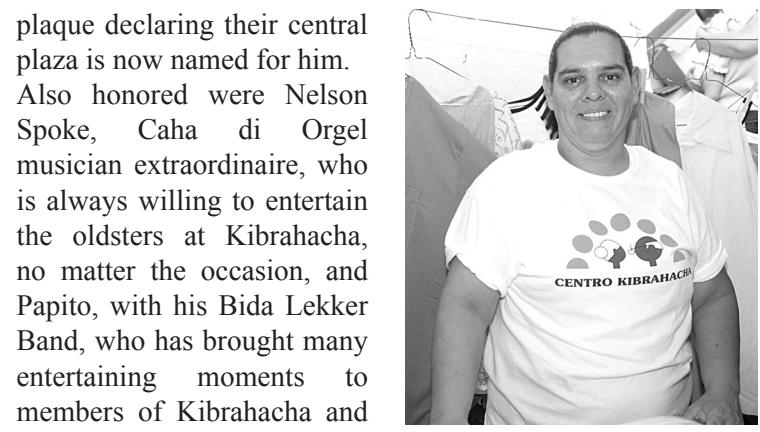
ORANJESTAD - Nothing expresses the sentiment of the holiday season in Aruba as the annual Fiesta Kibrahacha, conducted at the center for

the elderly in Piedra Plat. Centro Kibrahacha provides activities, social interaction and classes for retirees five days a week throughout the

year and one way they support their programs is with the annual fiesta, which is a full day of fun for all ages.

The gardens and several rooms of the center were occupied on Sunday with booths selling favorite island snacks and a gourmet lunch from Chef Andre Kelly, a great flea market and kid's corner along with dozens of other offerings, including Christmas decorations made by the members. Volunteers from the Inter-Service Club, which is a cooperative of Aruba's service clubs, could be found manning the booths dishing out vittles and serving drinks.

This year, Centro Kibrahacha Director Diana Uchtmann was joined by Rotary Club liaison to the center, Wilfrido Croes in honoring individuals who have donated their time and talents to the success of the annual fundraiser over the past decades. Eric D'Arnault of the Rotary has been on the Kibrahacha board for 25 years, and he was joined by the present board and his wife Mickey in unveiling the



plaque declaring their central plaza is now named for him. Also honored were Nelson Spoke, Caha di Orgel musician extraordinaire, who is always willing to entertain the oldsters at Kibrahacha, no matter the occasion, and Papito, with his Bida Lekker Band, who has brought many entertaining moments to members of Kibrahacha and their families. Island gaita group Katatumbo and their junior version, Katatumbito, were also honored for their dedication in contributing to the success of the annual fundraising event.



St. Maarten to host general meeting PANCAP in 2010

PHILIPSBURG--St. Maarten has been selected as the location for the tenth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) in October 2010.

This was a unanimous decision taken by the membership during the close of the recently concluded 9th Annual General Meeting, held in St. Georges, Grenada, on October 29 and 30.

St. Maarten's HIV/AIDS Programme Manager Suzette Moses-Burton said: "This is a tremendous opportunity, which took some lobbying on the part of the Dutch territories present at the meeting. PANCAP's AGM is one the largest and highest level regional HIV/AIDS meetings held annually."

The meeting brings together all the key stakeholders working in HIV in the region, including heads of governments, ministers, international donors, regional agencies, national programme managers, members of civil society and the community of people living with HIV, as well as non-governmental, community- and faith-based organisations.

This year's meeting had over 160 persons representing the various members of the partnership and it is expected that next year's meeting will draw even more participation, as it marks the 10th anniversary of the partnership.

"We felt that it would be an opportune moment for St. Maarten to be given the chance to host this meeting, as October 10, 2010 will also mark a historic occasion for our island, the achievement of country status, and what better way to demonstrate our pride in such an achievement than by welcoming and hosting delegates from the region and the world who come together to discuss the region's collective response to halt the spread of the HIV epidemic," she said.

"This will also be a significant boost for our tourism product and we intend the work closely with the St. Maarten Tourist Bureau in the planning of this event. As one of the most active members of the partnership, it also gives us the unique opportunity to expose the rest of the region to the peculiarities of the epidemic being faced by the Dutch territories. I am very pleased and proud that St. Maarten has been selected as the venue for such an auspicious and important event. We plan to make this the best ever PANCAP AGM." □



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*** Human Hints Daily ***

The Zone

We have reached the moment when Internal Clarity is of the utmost importance, yet society holds us in constant distraction. The ability to focus your mind is a direct path to Inner Clarity. When you are in the Zone, you are directly connected to your Spirit, your Guide through three dimensions. When you are in a state of Unfaltering Concentration, you are in the Now, and you are connected to your Higher Perspective. When you are Singulalry Focused, you are operating from a viewpoint beyond Duality.

The mind is naturally unstable, with thoughts constantly coming and going. In every moment, we choose what thoughts to concentrate on, and what thoughts to ignore. When we're concentrating, our mind is aware of only one thing. The instant any other thought enters your mind, ignore it by focusing more intently.

Mental Focus is an amazingly powerful tool to help us get past life's exceptionally difficult challenges. Focus gives you a moment's reprieve from otherwise constant and unbearable emotional pain. It's got all the escapist properties of getting drunk, and is far better for you in every way.

Life always comes at you in waves and as long as you're alive, there will be times when deadlines and pressures all come at you at once. The only way to take care of all your demands is to prioritize them, and focus on one thing at a time. The more you focus on the most important thing you have to do in any given moment, the more efficient you will be. With unwavering focus, we do a better job, faster.

When life overwhelms you, pick the most important three things you must do immediately, and do them one at a time. Concentration will help you become re-centered and empowered because you'll be getting things done that you have to do. When you are centered and empowered, you will be able to make logical decisions and act from logic instead of emotion. When you act from emotion, you always hurt yourself.

When you're in the Zone, your mind is singularly focused.

Even at the peak of exercise, when your

body cannot supply oxygen to your muscles any faster and your entire body gasps for breath, your mind should remain completely still because you remain focused. Distracting thoughts throw off your inner and outer balance, and cause confusion in your mind.

Become fully aware of every tiny detail of your heartbeat, your breathing, and the exact movements of your body.

Absolutely nothing exists except you and the object of your focus. Your physical senses fall away as your mind refuses to entertain any sensation beyond your Singular Focus.

Random thoughts show you when you are not totally focused.

When mental distractions enter your mind, they alert you to concentrate harder. All thoughts other than your immediate focus act as an alarm of your wandering mind. The instant you become aware of any other thought, focus on your Focus.

When you are fully focused, you are alone, still and silent. Your awareness of Time disappears because all that exists in your mind is the Now Moment.

Until Tomorrow...

Go to www.HumanHints.com to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

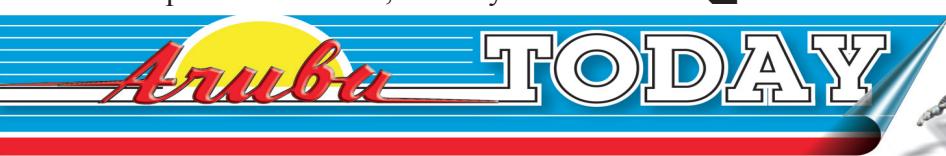
~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought.

HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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KEEP ARUBA CLEAN...



Early Birds catch the Fresh Catch at Fishes & More

Ask about the Early Bird Menu from 4 PM to 6:30 PM



Fishes & More specialize in fresh fish and seafood, and at the same time please the non-fish lovers as well. All the dishes are prepared a la minute by an internationally experienced kitchen team, which gives the twist to our dishes. Influences from all over the world are found back

on the menu and they are already well known for our daily changing specials. If you have a large party, or if there is anything you feel like in particular, Fishes & More can always arrange to have your dinner cooked just for you, as they work only with fresh and honest

products! Ideally located in front of the Occidental Resort (Former Allegro), they are visited both by individuals and families alike, as we have a kids playground and a kids menu to entertain them, so they can enjoy their

dinner as much as you will yours!

We have entertainment every night at 8PM, and even after dinner the perfect night out continues, as you

can shop till you drop since the shops on our friendly square are open until eleven.

See what its like to experience real fresh dining joy with a twist!

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**"Early Bird: daily 5-7pm
3-course dinner
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Experience Papillon's gripping story! Introducing a catching special for the early Birds

PALM BEACH – Henri Charrière, one of the world's most famous prisoners, would surely have had the time of his life at Papillon Restaurant in The Village, across from the Radisson Resort. Nicknamed Papillon because of the butterfly tattoo on his chest, the Frenchman was the first convict to escape from Devil's Island, something that nobody had ever done before. Charrière's thrilling, gripping...

auto-biography has been the concept behind Papillon Restaurant. The décor, the decorations and especially the restrooms wink at the thirteen terrible years Papillon spent in prison in French Guyana. Papillon restaurant's menu reflects the Frenchman's arduous journey to freedom: classic French dishes have been dusted with daring Caribbean flair and are a culinary journey for your taste buds. The spacious outside terrace is perfect for casual fine dining; the iron bars, flecks of rust and stains on the walls make one very glad not to be in Papillon's shoes in the 1940's! Charrière would undoubtedly have loved 'his' place on Aruba: this is luxury living for anyone!

Early Bird

Papillon Restaurant offers a daily Early Bird special. A delicious 3-course meal with a glass of house wine for just \$29.75 per person between 5pm and 7pm

Opening hours

Papillon's opening hours are from 5 pm until midnight. The restaurant's daily specials will be explained by the staff. For reservations, please call 586 5400 or go to www.papillonaruba.com.

Papillon Restaurant is located in The Village, just across from the Radisson Resort.



Papillon
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day with the Discover Scuba Dive Course, get PADI certified or join us on our daily one and two tank dives. Red Sail Sports is Aruba's leading dive and watersports operator. Activity desks are located at the Hyatt Regency, Marriott Resorts and on Renaissance Island.

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*Must be a Players Club member. Must be present to win. All prizes will be paid in Instant Credit. Entry tickets must be printed by 10:00pm and in the drawing barrel by 10:15pm to be eligible for that day's drawing. Drawing drum will be emptied nightly and all tickets will be placed into the grand prize drawing drum. If no winner is present, that day's prize will be added to grand prize drawing on December 1st. See Players Club for complete details.



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At a Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa

Blake & Jodi Lane are wed at sunset



PALM BEACH – Lovebirds Blake & Jodi Lane, from Fairfax, Vancouver, tied the knot at a colorful, Caribbean wedding ceremony on the beach at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa.

The groom was visibly moved to see his beautiful bride go down the aisle shortly before sunset, dressed in a stunning white gown, fragrant frangipani blooms in her hair. Blake has been to Aruba countless times, as his family owns a timeshare condo at Costa Linda Beach Resort, while it was Jodi's memorable first. They met at a concert two years ago and when their upcoming wedding was first discussed, Aruba was their first choice, and the Radisson setting won over any other on the island.

Kids Lily, Logan & baby Boston contributed nicely to the ceremony, in addition to 74 valued family members and friends who traveled to Aruba on the occasion.

The beach ceremony was

blessed by reverend Sidney Jacob, and coordinated by Lissy Lampe, Ceremonies & Celebrations in Aruba.



The fantastic cocktail party and dinner was arranged by Lisa Damerman, the dedicated event specialist of the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa. □

Photos by Angela Munzenhofer

Bella Aruba Photography



Sunset Grille, a prime Steakhouse offering Spa Cuisine



Palm Beach – The Sunset Grille at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa needs no introduction. The award winning American steakhouse with its chic, cosmopolitan atmosphere headlines Prime Beef, the highest grade U.S.D.A -- only 2% of all beef is graded prime, required to age a minimum of 4 weeks. While steaks and chops make up the heart of the menu, the resort's Restaurant Chef Maarten Smeets innovated

unparalleled appetizers and extraordinary desserts, which helped the Sunset Grille achieve the Triple AAA's elite four-diamond status – a rare feat for steakhouses. Sunset Grille well-known as the number one steakhouse in Aruba offers also spa cuisine, for the health conscious visitors, featuring appetizers, salads and a wide array of seafood selections. The spa cuisine dishes are balanced by enhancing

flavors with citrus, spice and herbs and taste is elevated by marinating, smoking and grilling, Smeets explains.

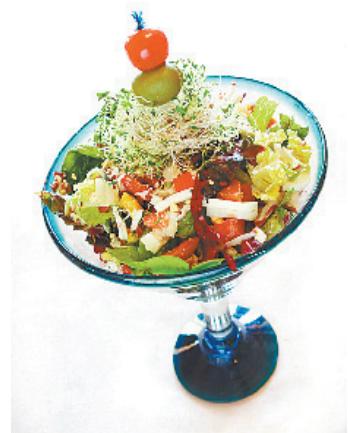
"We now use many more herbs, vegetables, grains and fibers," he adds, "all designed to sustain a healthier life style; and we stay away from saturated fats and refined sugars, as well as use salt sparingly," he informs.

"The Sunset Grille kitchen," Smeets reveals, "uses no trans fats, and our guests," he banters, "stay healthy, wealthy and wise with our new and exciting spa cuisine."

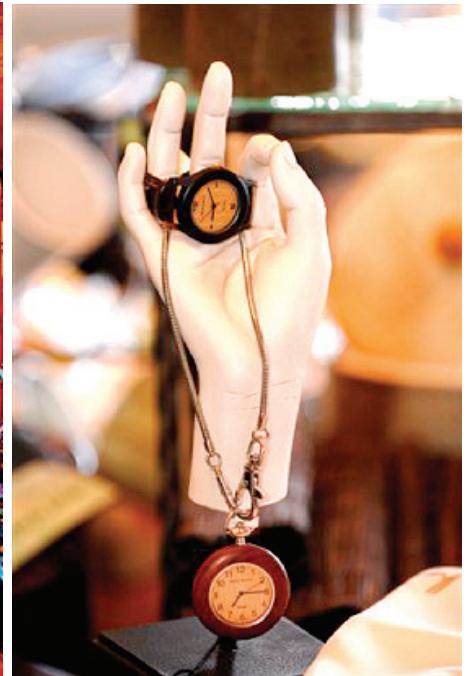
Among the patrons favorite dishes are, the Sunset Grille's famous Chop House Martini Salad, "Shaken not Stirred;" the lobster bisque with a pastry crust, the various cuts of prime beef, the popular Rack of Lamb, Stuffed Quail and the delicious Veal Oscar. The spa cuisine features items such as Tuna Tataki, the Spinach Salad, Chilean Seabass, grilled Swordfish and the Asian style Salmon



to cut corners, especially when it comes to buying, aging and cutting meat. No wonder the readers of Caribbean Travel & Life named it the top restaurant in the Caribbean. □



Fun Island Living, at T.H. Palm & Company



Palm Beach -- The beautiful T.H. Palm & Company offers an exceptional, upscale shopping experience aptly described as "Fun Island Living." Owned by long time Aruba resident Jodi Tobman who has several other boutiques on the island, Jodi reports she had a lot of fun creating this magnificent jewel of a boutique which first opened its doors in June of 2004.

A wide variety of distinctive items

are on display on interesting antique décor pieces, from luscious silk tropical shirts for men to stylish resort wear and exclusive artisan jewelry for women. The theme of "Fun Island Living" is apparent in the wide selection of accessories for home including tropical barware and serving pieces, books, artwork and lamps. There are handbags "to live for" and an array of gifts for children of all ages as well as a variety of novelty gift items for pets.

When visiting T.H. Palm & Company, we suggest you take your time as you will need to browse from floor to ceiling in order not to miss anything. Larger items can be shipped to your home address at a nominal fee and shipping is always an available option.

For those who find it hard to choose from among all the enchanting objects in stock or for those who do

not have time to shop, a Personal Shopper service is available to assist at no extra charge, by appointment, please.

T.H. Palm & Company is conveniently located in front of the Playa Linda Beach Resort and offers late night shopping and convenient parking. Open daily from 9 a.m. - 10 p.m. Fridays open until 11 p.m. Telephone +297 586 8909. Email: orders@sala manderholdings.com □



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Few Brooks Tower Accord applications in first week

~ *Jacoba says employers should assist workers* ~

PHILIPSBURG--Central Government officials are disappointed about the number of undocumented persons living in St. Maarten who have so far requested Brooks Tower Accord permits.

Only 134 persons living here illegally had filed requests for the one-year residence permit under the new accord up to Saturday. The new regulations went into effect Tuesday, November 3.

"This is very disappointing," Justice Minister Magali Jacoba told reporters at the new Immigration and Naturalisation Department (IND) building Saturday.

Hundreds of persons hoping to become legal residents ahead of strict controls to eject undocumented persons from the Netherlands Antilles, had swarmed the IND building since Tuesday. The accord grants temporary legal residence to persons living illegally in St. Maarten, Curaçao and Bonaire under certain conditions.

However, only 495 persons got past security guards to submit requests for the permits from Brooks Tower Accord workers. Guards turned away hundreds at the door because they didn't have the application forms needed to file requests.

Inside, workers sent away hundreds of others to complete their documentation.

The Central Government requires persons who request permits to present proof of how long they have lived here and completed application forms. It also wants applicants to provide copies of all documents.

Minister Jacoba said employers were also refusing to register their employees for fear of penalties. "They need not be afraid of sanctions," Jacoba said. The Brooks Tower Accord period allows persons to register without any difficulty.

Only persons who have lived here since before December 31, 2001 (Category I), or since some time between January 1, 2002, and December 31, 2005 (Category II), are eligible for the temporary permits. Others must leave, but they face no penalty for being here illegally and can request residence/employment permits from home.

The Brooks Tower Accord period continues until December 15. The first permits for successful applicants are expected out by next week. There are no guarantees that an undocumented person will receive the permit.

The Central Government has suspended all large-scale Immigration controls until March 2010, giving persons who don't receive permits time to leave the country. □

USM marks anniversary with pomp, ceremony

~ *Unveils co-founders plaques, honours donors* ~

PHILIPSBURG--The University of St. Martin (USM) rolled out the red carpet to guests to its 20th anniversary celebrations attended by a high-level delegation of Island and Central Government officials, businessmen, the Wathey family and co-founder Ambassador Hushang Ansary and his wife Shahla, among other dignitaries.

The ceremony, held at USM Saturday evening, included the unveiling of photo plaques of co-founders the late Dr. Claude Wathey and Ambassador Ansary, as well as the unveiling of large plaques at entrance recognising different categories of USM sponsors.

Scotiabank Head Elie Bendaly and Haresh Boolchand of Boolchands unveiled the Patron's wall, containing the names of businesses that donated US \$100,000 to USM for the construction of the second level.

The highlight of the evening was the honouring of Ansary by the Central and Island Governments. He was honoured for his significant contributions to the development of higher education in St. Maarten (see related story).

Classrooms at USM were decked out for the event to depict the various courses offered by the university. Particularly interesting was the hospitality room, which depicted an ultra-modern hotel room. A Westin Chef was also on hand in the USM corridors serving up treats to guests as they toured the university.

During the official part of the ceremony, Education Commissioner William Marlin pledged the Executive Council's support to the university, saying government would not let USM reach its twenty-first birthday without its help. He said in spite of the economic situation, he is confident that USM will receive help to overcome its hurdles and to become the university for Country St. Maarten. He said also that it was a pleasure to see the strides at USM and to know it has been recording growth in its student population.

USM President Josianne Fleming-Artsen as well as Chairperson of the Board, Dr. Lockie Johnson, called for partnering and investments in USM respectively.

Fleming-Artsen said partnering with USM is a partnership that will last forever. "We cannot build this country without first building this university, without consciously knowing that the human capital of Country St. Maarten must be developed here at this institution of higher learning," the USM President said.

"The Honourable Hushang Ansary and the late Dr. Claude Wathey's vision is still the most brilliant of them all. Let the next 20 years of this institution not be another 20 years of trying to survive, but let it be one of sustainability, of recognition, and of accreditation," she said.

She commended the founders for their vision saying that they knew 20 years ago that St. Maarten needed to have

a university. She said USM, which has grown tremendously over the past two decades, is standing on the great salt pond to produce and deliver people who are the "salt of the earth." She said USM is yet to undergo the most challenging of all as it leads to acquiring accreditation.

Johnson said investing in the university gives great returns on investment. She said USM had been able to build an entire second level, furnish all of its classrooms and offices and create a library and computer lab with the help of its donors: Partners, Sponsors, Patrons and Friends as well as USONA which invested in USM.

"We now have a modern new facility that is twice its size. USM has given you, our donors, a great return on your investment," she said.

Speaking on behalf of the Wathey family, Jason Lista, Dr. Claude Wathey's grandson, said it was not without coincidence that the USM was founded not long after his grandfather declared that St. Maarten should become an independent state.

"He understood that such an institution like this university would play a vital role in the development of our young, and still developing, democracy," he told the audience.

"It was decided to affiliate the school with Johnson & Wales University of Rhode Island, a school known for its practical approach to higher education, one that equips its students with the skills they need to be effective and competitive in the job market. □

AIDS is leading cause of death, disease for women



Kenyans take part in a parade dubbed "Yes We Can" as part of the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM) conference in Nairobi November 4, 2009. Participants called on U.S. President Barack Obama and other donor agencies to continue funding the treatment of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

REUTERS/Thomas Mukoya (KENYA POLITICS HEALTH)

**By BRADLEY S. KLAPPER,
Associated Press Writer**

GENEVA — In its first study of women's health around the globe, the World Health Organization said Monday that the AIDS virus is the leading cause of death and disease among women between the ages of 15 and 44.

Unsafe sex is the leading risk factor in developing countries for these women of childbearing age, with others including lack of access to contraceptives and iron deficiency, the WHO said. Throughout the world, one in five deaths among women

in this age group is linked to unsafe sex, according to the U.N. agency.

"Women who do not know how to protect themselves from such infections, or who are unable to do so, face increased risks of death or illness," WHO said in a 91-page report. "So do those who cannot protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy or control their fertility because of lack of access to contraception."

The data were included in a report that attempts to highlight the unequal health treatment a female faces from

childbirth through infancy and adolescence into maturity and old age.

WHO chief Dr. Margaret Chan noted that women enjoy a biological advantage because they tend to live six to eight years longer than men. But in many parts of the world they suffer serious disadvantages because of poverty, poorer access to health care and cultural norms that put a priority on the well-being of men, she said.

Chan called it a "preventable tragedy" that nearly 15 percent of deaths in adult women occur in maternity, according to the statistics from 2004.

She said the discrimination extends throughout a woman's life, from girlhood diseases that aren't identified because they are not sicknesses affecting boys, to clinical trials and medicines developed on the basis of curing adult males. □

A picture of E.coli bacteria is seen in this undated file photo from the USDA. A New Hampshire resident reportedly died after consuming ground beef that may have been tainted by bacteria that can cause diarrhea, dehydration and kidney failure. The U.S. Agriculture Department said it became aware the meat might be tainted by E. coli O157:H7 bacteria during an investigation of a cluster of food-borne illnesses in New England.

REUTERS/USDA/Handout

Lawmaker wants probe of E. coli and school lunches

**By LIBBY QUAID,
AP Education Writer**

WASHINGTON —

The chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee wants an investigation into the risk of deadly E. coli getting into school lunches.

Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., is worried about a recent outbreak that killed at least two people and sickened about two dozen others in 11 states. The E. coli outbreak was linked to ground beef produced by Fairbank Farms of Ashville, N.Y.

No schools were involved in the outbreak. But Miller said he's worried that tainted food might be purchased for school meal programs.

Miller asked the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, to see whether there are adequate protections for school meals at the local, state and federal level. He also asked investigators to compare the safety and quality of ground beef available to

schools with the ground beef available to restaurants and other commercial buyers.

The GAO said in a September report that federal authorities had failed to tell schools about recalls of potentially tainted peanut products and canned vegetables, and cafeterias may have unknowingly served them to children.

GAO found the Agriculture Department didn't always make sure states and schools were notified promptly about recalled food distributed through the federal school lunch and breakfast programs, which serve 30 million students.

Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York has introduced a bill to ensure that recalled food is quickly removed from school lunches, and she is planning on introducing another bill that would require more testing in ground beef plants.

"Food items that are being pulled from grocery store shelves across the country are still being served to millions of school children," Gillibrand said in a statement. "It's wrong, it's dangerous, and we need to take action."

E. coli is among several kinds of bacteria that can sicken or kill people. Outbreaks of food poisoning from E. coli often are linked to ground beef, but recent outbreaks also involved prepackaged cookie dough and fresh spinach. □

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BUSINESS Aruba TODAY

Stocks jump after G-20 pledge to aid economies

By IEVA M. AUGSTUMS
and TIM PARADIS,
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK — Stocks jumped to new highs for the year Monday as the dollar extended its slide, boosting prices for commodities including gold and oil.

Energy and materials stocks led the market higher. Investors were also buying stocks on growing confidence about the global economic recovery, getting a shot of optimism from news this weekend that the Group of 20

countries will keep stimulus measures in place. Investors saw the agreement as a signal that interest rates would remain low. Major stock indexes rose more than 1 percent, including the Dow Jones industrial average, which rose 150 points.

Investors around the world are seeing the dollar as weaker than other currencies because of low U.S. interest rates, and so they're using it for what's known as "carry trade," to finance purchases of investments in other countries.

That trend takes the dollar down when those purchases are made.

The stock market likes a weaker dollar because it helps U.S. exporters by making their goods cheaper to overseas buyers and giving the companies a boost when they convert profits from abroad to dollars.

The U.S. dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of foreign currencies, fell more than 1 percent to its lowest level in 15 months. The index began



FILE - In this Sept. 25, 2008 file photo, a Wall St. street sign is shown in front of the American flag hanging on the New York Stock Exchange in New York.

AP Photo/Mary Altaffer, file)

sliding for the past eight months since major stock indicators bounced off 12-year lows. Investors, although they've been basing most of their buy or sell decisions on the economy, have also been following a pattern of funneling money into stocks when the dollar weakens and pulling it out when the currency rises.

Commodities prices, meanwhile, tend to rise when the dollar is down, so gold topped \$1,100 an ounce. Crude oil rose \$2.23 to \$79.66 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, helped in part by Tropical Storm Ida, which threatened the Gulf of Mexico.

Energy and materials stocks rose along with commodities prices, and investors' enthusiasm for those stocks spilled over to other industries.

Brian Battle, vice president of trading at Performance Trust Capital Partners in Chicago, said the strength of the carry trade is giving an artificial lift to a range of assets, including stocks.

"There's cheap money that's going to be pumping its way into the system," he said. "That money is finding its home in the currency and commodity markets."

In early afternoon trading,

the Dow rose 154.40, or 1.5 percent, to 10,177.82. The index rose as high as 10,186.21, topping its previous 12-month trading high of 10,119.46 set Oct. 21.

The broader Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 17.93, or 1.7 percent, to 1,087.23, and the Nasdaq composite index rose 32.59, or 1.5 percent, to 2,145.03.

Jason Pride, director of research at Haverford Investments, isn't troubled by the slide in the dollar because he sees it as another sign that fear in the market is easing after the slide of the past two years. Investors rushed into the dollar as they sought the safest assets.

"As the economy gets back to normal from what were very dire circumstances earlier this year the equity markets are going to be moving up and the dollar should be falling," he said.

Incorporatenews, McDonald's Corp., the world's largest fast-food chain, said monthly sales growth was relatively flat in the U.S. but offset by stronger growth globally. The stock rose 81 cents to \$62.53.

Britain's Cadbury Plc rejected a \$16.4 billion hostile takeover bid from Kraft Foods Inc. Cadbury rose 27 cents to \$50.77, while Kraft fell 34 cents to \$26.44.

Cadbury rejects Kraft bid

By JANE WARDELL,
AP Business Writer

LONDON — British candy maker Cadbury PLC rejected a renewed 9.8 billion pound (\$16.4 billion) hostile bid from Kraft Foods Inc. on Monday after the U.S. company refused to sweeten a previous offer.

Kraft's decision to keep the terms of its previously rebuffed cash-and-stock approach effectively means a lower offer for investors in London-based Cadbury because of a shift in the share prices of both companies.

The prospect of a tie-up has caused some consternation in Britain, where the 195-year-old Cadbury is a much-loved brand — its Dairy Milk is the country's top-selling chocolate bar.

Kraft, the maker of Oreo cookies, Nabisco crackers and its namesake cheese, argued that the proposed deal — though lower than the 10.2 billion pound offer on the table in September — "represents a substantial premium to the unaffected share price of Cadbury."

Analysts had said that Kraft, based in Northfield, Illinois, needed to improve that offer to have any chance of success in winning Cadbury,



FILE - A worker fixes the display of Kraft Food's Oreo cookies at a Market in Palo Alto, Calif., in this file photo dated Monday, July 28, 2008. Shares in British chocolate maker Cadbury PLC edged higher on Monday Nov. 9, 2009, as a deadline loomed for Kraft Foods Inc. to make a formal takeover offer for the candy maker, or under British takeover rules Kraft will be prohibited from making a new offer for six months. Cadbury has already spurned a \$16.7 billion cash-and-stock offer from Kraft.

(AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, FILE)

which also makes Green & Black's chocolate brand, Halls lozenges and Trident and Dentyne gum. But Kraft instead retained its offer of 300 pence in cash and 0.2589 new Kraft shares. While that translated to a deal worth 745 pence per Cadbury share in September, a surge in Cadbury's share price since then leaves the value of the deal now languishing at 717 pence. Cadbury's shares were trading far above that level on Monday, up 0.3 percent at 760 pence in afternoon trade. □

"The United States maintains similar 'forward operating locations' in El Salvador and Aruba-Curacao

Will the militarization of the world by the Pentagon and NATO ever stop? PT. 1

by Rick Rozoff

"In 1989, no one could have foreseen that a decade later Western military expansion would begin a process that led to American bases in parts of the world where their presence was hitherto unimaginable: Kosovo, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Iraq, Australia, Bulgaria and Romania. And the first permanent U.S. base in Africa, Camp Lemonier in Djibouti, with a new regional military command, AFRICOM, covering the entire continent."

This year began with Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, visiting Colombia in mid-January and meeting with that nation's defense minister and top military commander. While in Bogota Mullen railed against the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrillas and accused the government of Venezuela of conniving with them.

Less than two months and the inauguration of a new president later, America's top military commander returned to Colombia, the third largest recipient of U.S. military assistance in the world, as part of a Latin American tour that also took him to Brazil, Chile, Peru and Mexico. Upon returning to Washington Mullen said that "The U.S. military is ready to help Mexico in its deadly war against drug cartels with some of the same counter-insurgency tactics used against militant networks in Iraq and Afghanistan" [1] and "the Plan Colombia aid package could be an 'overarching' model for Pakistan and Afghanistan...." [2]

He was then speaking for the Barack Obama and no longer the George W. Bush administration but Mullen, like his superior Defense Secretary Robert Gates who nominated him for his current post in 2007, was advocating a military and geostrategic polity that is pursued regardless of who occupies the Oval Office in the White House and whose photograph adorns the State Department's Harry S. Truman Building headquarters in Foggy Bottom.

Military commanders and former CIA directors like Mullen and Gates have seen a succession of presidents and secretaries of state pass by during their professional careers and the latter, like shadows on a wall, have not affected in any substantive manner plans for international military and intelligence expansion. Elected officials and their civilian appointees are to be humored,

cajoled or ignored as the situation requires but have never stood in the way of the creation and maintenance of a 65-year-old military-security-intelligence state with its tentacles extended into every latitude and longitude of the planet.

The role of American elected officials on the federal level and what the nation and the world politely pretend to consider its diplomatic corps is to issue a steady stream of imprecations against "rogue regimes" and frighten the domestic populace with inflated if not entirely concocted claims of other, non-Western, nations' military threats, the better to give the Pentagon (which may play the part of a coy and hesitant ingenue for public consumption) what it wants.

Witness the false alarm sounded by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on May 1st of this year when she, striking the pose of a modern Paul Revere, warned that Washington's backyard was besieged by specters of the Cold War once thought long laid to rest and spoke of the need to "counter growing Iranian, Chinese and Russian influence in the Western Hemisphere," lamenting that "Republican President George W. Bush's policy had been counterproductive, allowing leftist leaders like Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, Bolivia's Evo Morales and Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega to promote anti-U.S. sentiment and rely on aid from China, Iran and Russia." [3]

The fact that the three heads of state identified by Clinton as a New World Axis of Evil irrationally bent on contaminating their neighbors with an "anti-U.S. sentiment" were popularly elected

is of no concern to Washington. Central and South American electorates have voted before in ways displeasing to the U.S. - Guatemala in 1951, Guyana in 1953 and 1961, Chile in 1970

- and Washington successfully reversed the outcomes through subversion and coups d'état.

The month after Clinton's statement U.S.-trained commanders in Honduras ordered troops to storm the residence of President Manuel Zelaya, abduct him and fly him to exile in Costa Rica.

The leader of the coup, School of the Americas-trained General Romeo Vasquez Velasquez, also dispatched troops to assault the ambassadors of Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba, as though he had studied Hillary Clinton's comments and taken them to heart.

Following the armed overthrow of the Honduran government on June 28, a state of affairs still not reversed over four months afterward notwithstanding the U.S.'s decisive leverage over the ringleaders in Tegucigalpa, media coverage was rife with allusions to a return to the era of Latin American coups staged and backed by Washington during the Cold War.

This November 9th will mark the twentieth anniversary of the event that more than any other is acknowledged as having signalled the end of the Cold War: The opening of the gates along the wall dividing East and West Berlin. The fall of the Berlin Wall.

At the time much of the world breathed a collective sigh of relief and in some quarters emitted a whoop of triumph, expecting that the end of the decades-long U.S.-Soviet conflict would issue in a golden age of global harmony, disarmament, the elimination of nuclear weapons and a massive peace dividend to fund civilian needs long given short shrift during the preceding forty three years.

Those hopes turned out to be so many vain opium reveries.

Warning signs were evident even at the time.

The former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) was abruptly and without a referendum absorbed into the Federal Republic (West Germany) - and into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a U.S.-dominated military bloc - and the 1990 Western armed buildup in the Persian Gulf and the next year's war with Iraq followed almost immediately.

One didn't have to wait that long, however, to discover that the fruits of a Western victory in the Cold War were sour. Were poison.

Less than a month following the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, on December 2, 1989 U.S. president George H.W. Bush and his Soviet counterpart Mikhail Gorbachev led respective national delegations to the Mediterranean island nation of Malta for a summit described fairly typically since as "the most important since 1945, when British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Soviet premier Joseph Stalin and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt agreed on a post-war plan for Europe at Yalta." [4]

The American delegation, incidentally, included two officials who weren't familiar to many observers at the time but

would become so over a decade later: Then Director for Soviet and East European Affairs at the National Security Council Condoleezza Rice and U.S. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Paul Wolfowitz.

Within days of the summit's completion and as though to suggest that the two leaders agreed to address respective Cold War era thorns in their sides, ten days of violence erupted in Romania on December 16, culminating in the nation's aged leader, Nicolae Ceausescu, and his wife Elena dragged before a firing squad on Christmas Day.

In the middle of that ten-day uprising Washington launched an armed invasion of Panama, Operation Just Cause, with over 27,000 troops and 300 aircraft, deposing President Manuel Noriega, who continues to languish in an American prison cell almost twenty years later. The post-Cold War world order was baptized in blood.

Following the Panama attack and the next two years' preparation for and activation of war plans against Iraq, the U.S. and its allies observed an almost decent interval - aside from wreaking carnage in Somalia, conducting ongoing bombing runs in Iraq, bombing Bosnian Serb targets with depleted uranium-tipped shells and firing cruise missiles into Afghanistan and Sudan - until 1999, when the U.S. and NATO

launched a 78-day air war against Yugoslavia and right afterward Washington inaugurated Plan Colombia. The latter has resulted in Washington providing almost \$5 billion in military assistance to Colombia since 2000. Current American vice president Joseph

Biden pushed the hard-line - counterinsurgency - version of the initiative in the U.S. Senate in 1999.

Since then there has been a reactivation of the worst aspects of the Cold War period. Just as then, political change in any country is viewed through the prism of what it means in terms of alignment with or apart from the United States. And neutrality is not an option. The top official in charge of American foreign policy, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, has indicated her view of Latin American nations attempting an independent regional and global orientation. They are enemies. And are the proxies of larger adversaries: Russia, China and Iran.

On October 30 the U.S. and the Alvaro Uribe regime in Colombia signed an agreement during a closed-door ceremony in Bogota for the Pentagon to acquire seven new military bases in the South American country. [5]

"One of the bases involved, at Palanquero, 180 kilometers (110 miles) west of Bogota, boasts a 3.5-km (two-mile) runway adapted for large cargo planes, which critics say would allow the US to project itself far beyond Colombia's borders." [6]

"The United States maintains similar 'forward operating locations' in El Salvador and Aruba-Curacao [Netherlands Antilles]." [7]

Colombian troops illegally entered neighboring Venezuela last August and Caracas claims to have apprehended Colombian paramilitaries on its soil at the time of the signing of the U.S.-Colombia bases deal on October 30. □

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Taylor made? All eyes on Swift at CMA awards



FILE - In this Sept. 17, 2009 file photo, Taylor Swift poses before the Tommy Hilfiger spring 2010 collection is shown at New York Fashion Week.

(AP Photo/Diane Bondareff, file)

By CHRIS TALBOTT,
Associated Press Writer

NASHVILLE, Tennessee — Kenny Chesney has made the very hard work of dominating country music look easy.

And Taylor Swift is paying close attention.

The 19-year-old sensation has the record sales. She beat out every living artist — no matter the genre

— this year with more than 3 million copies of her “Fearless” CD sold and counting (only Michael Jackson has sold more). The album remains No. 3 after 51 weeks on the charts.

And she’s moving concert tickets as fast as they can print them.

That might be enough to sway the more than 5,000 members of the Country Music Association, who decide who gets the trophy for entertainer of the year, the CMA’s highest honor, at the CMA Awards on Wednesday night (the broadcast will air live on ABC).

She’s the youngest ever nominated for the award and the first solo female act since Faith Hill in 2000, and she’s faced a lot of questions about whether either is a limiting factor.

“I think you have to do the work and put in the effort and do the touring that it takes to win entertainer of the year,” she said in an interview with The Associated Press. “And I don’t really think it has anything to do with gender. I think if you want to compete with the boys, play on a level that they’re playing at.”

And the guys in this category are playing at the highest.

Using a combination of unparalleled album and ticket sales, Chesney has dominated the CMA Awards’ most prestigious category with three straight wins and four of the last five. A fifth win would move him past Garth Brooks for most in the 43 years of the awards. This is the eighth straight year he’s sold more than a million concert tickets, and fans are drawn to his brand of Caribbean cool like no other.

Brad Paisley leads all nominees with seven and is entering his second year as co-host with Carrie Underwood. His album “American Saturday Night” debuted at No. 2 on the album charts when it was released earlier this year and he’s had 11 straight No. 1 singles on the country charts.

Keith Urban’s supercharged live show has made him one of country’s most bankable stars and his album “Defying Gravity” hit No. 1 on the Billboard 200. He’s the only artist to interrupt Chesney’s recent domination in the category, winning in 2005.

And then there’s George Strait, a two-time winner in the category and CMA’s career leader in nominations (79, with Alan Jackson) and wins (22) whose “Twang” also debuted as the nation’s No. 1 album. Paisley said he’s put together the kind of career and rapport with his fans that’s really only possible in country music, and that “always” makes him a contender.

“Look at George Strait,” Paisley said. “It’s just unbelievable. He first won entertainer of the year 20 years ago in 1989. Isn’t that crazy?”

But 2009 might be Swift’s year — and she could soon be in the company of icons like Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton and Reba McEntire, three of the six other female acts to win entertainer of the year. But tell that to Swift, and she modestly dismisses the idea: “Don’t fill my head with that.”

“It’s so wonderful when people come up to me and say that I have a shot at winning. It actually is really, really a wonderful thing when people do that,” she said. “But my parents raised me to have the mindset that the world doesn’t owe me anything and you can’t feel entitled to winning, you can’t feel entitled to success.”

It’s statements like those that have won Swift fans within the industry as well — not to mention a few votes.

“I will say I did vote for her,” McEntire said. “The obvious is that she is a female and I do tend to support my female friends and artists in the business, but also because I think she is the one who’s done the most this year — television, touring. She is an extraordinary person and I think she highly deserves it.” □

Review: New bio of Sugar Ray Robinson packs punch

— have tried and failed to render a full portrait.

Until now. Wil Haygood’s new biography of Robinson, “Sweet Thunder: The Life and Times of Sugar Ray Robinson,” is about as fine a book about a boxer as you will find — up there with the right-left combo of David Remnick’s “King of the World” and David Margolick’s “Beyond Glory.”

Some of the finest writers alive have endeavored to wax poetic about the brutal sport of boxing. As a topic, Robinson lacks, perhaps, the cultural punch of Ali but one of the many services Haygood provides in “Thunder” is putting a proper historical frame on Robinson.

“Thunder” is the third biography in a trilogy of books by Haygood, a Washington Post writer, about pivotal black figures that also includes Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Sammy

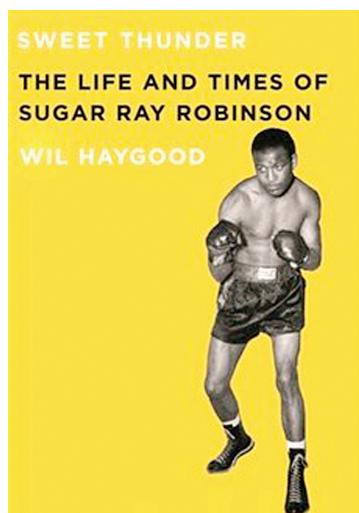
Davis Jr. In each he delivers a comprehensive biography and a compelling case for their cultural importance.

“Sugar Ray Robinson was the first modern prizefighter to take culture — music and grace and dance — into the ring with him,” Haygood writes. “He had convinced himself that style was as much a discipline as boxing.”

Robinson’s evolution was pivotal. His concept of style, swagger and showmanship came to define boxing for generations to come. Without Robinson, in other words, there might not have been an Ali. Haygood takes us deftly from Robinson’s childhood in Detroit, where he was born Walker Smith, to New York City’s Harlem, where he first took on the name Ray Robinson for a fight. He charts the heights of Robinson’s boxing career, his retirement work

with children and ultimately his early death at age 67. For decades, it seems, boxing scribes have fussed over one of those unending arguments: Who is, pound for pound, the

best fighter of all-time? Robinson is always in that conversation. And should the topic ever pivot to the best writers about the sport, Haygood should be too. □



This book cover released by Knopf shows ‘Sweet Thunder: The Life and Times of Sugar Ray Robinson’, by Wil Haygood.

(AP Photo/Knopf)

By HENRY C. JACKSON,
Associated Press Writer

“Sweet Thunder” (Knopf, 464 pages, \$27.95), by Wil Haygood: The boxer Sugar Ray Robinson was a man of glittering skill and deep complexity. So complex, in fact, that several writers — including Robinson himself

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RIM to help app developers use ads, micropayments



By Wojtek Dabrowski

TORONTO (Reuters)

- Research In Motion is making it easier for software developers make money from the applications they develop for its popular BlackBerry smartphone as the company falters in the face of stiff competition from rivals like Apple Inc.

New plans announced on Monday will let developers of games, news summaries and other "apps" insert advertising into the programs more easily. RIM will also help developers better integrate and process payments for premium content. "Attracting developers is critical,"

RIM co-Chief Executive Jim Balsillie said in an interview. "Now, developers can have ad revenue and ad-sharing strategy in their applications." Apps are becoming increasingly important for companies like RIM and Apple as the variety and price of available software helps consumers decide what phone to buy. RIM opened its own small application store in April, stung by Apple's success and far-wider offering. A view that RIM lags Apple in apps, along with rising competition, has already brought several downgrades for the one-time market darling, most recently from Susquehanna Financial. Susquehanna on Monday downgraded RIM to "neutral" from "positive" on tougher competition on sales of high-end smartphones. The downgrades have hit RIM shares. The stock,

currently at \$59.62, is well above March's year low of \$35.05, but below its year high of \$88.08, set in September 2008. Some smartphone apps already feature advertising, while more costly apps come without. There are also basic versions of some apps available for free, but users can upgrade to a full-featured version for a price. Apps range from those that help improve productivity to frivolous time wasters, like ones that let users simulate the sound of a fart with a smartphone. Users are downloading them in droves. Apple's app store reported more than 2 billion downloads in late September.

The use of ads can lower an app's price to the consumer -- or make it free -- which increases downloads.

Applications are also crucial to RIM's effort to

win a bigger share of the consumer market, from which much of its recent subscriber growth has come. The software complements models of consumer-focused BlackBerrys, such as the touch-screen Storm, which has been RIM's answer to Apple's iPhone. RIM's push into the retail market has put the company in more direct competition with Apple and other consumer smartphone vendors such as Motorola and Nokia. Last month, Apple said it sold 7.4 million iPhones in its last quarter and the company posted earnings that easily topped Wall Street forecasts, pushing its stock to record highs. In September RIM posted results and an outlook that fell short of what investors had expected, sending its shares tumbling more than 15 percent. □

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On Top Of The News

Email: news@arubatoday.com

Tuesday, November 11, 2009



Giant domino pieces installed along a stretch of the Berlin Wall's original path are seen at Brandenburg Gate in Berlin Monday, Nov. 9, 2009, during celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Associated Press

Thousands cheer 20 years since fall of Berlin Wall

KIRSTEN GRIESHABER
MELISSA EDDY

Associated Press Writers

BERLIN (AP) — Ulrich Sauff and his wife stared at the mammoth domino pieces marking the path where the Berlin Wall once stood and reminisced about life in the barrier's shadow.

"It was like a prison," said Mr. Sauff, 73, who lived on the Western side of the wall. "For us 'Wessis,' the few kilometers from our old home to our new home (in the East) was unthinkable."

The Sauffs were among those who gathered Monday to celebrate 20 years of unity, marking the day the wall came down. Thousands cheered as 1,000 colorfully decorated dominoes along a mile-

long (two-kilometer) route were toppled to symbolize both the moment the wall came crashing down and the resulting fall of communist countries in Eastern Europe. It was the finale to a day of memorial services, speeches and events that attracted leaders from around the world, including former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Merkel and 78-year-old Gorbachev stood shoulder to shoulder as they crossed a former fortified border crossing point between East and West Berlin to cheers of "Gorby! Gorby!" bring this up to the first reference to gorby. "Looking back, we can see many causes that led to the peaceful revolution, but it still remains a miracle," German President Horst Koehler told the leaders of all 27 European Union countries, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Angela Merkel — Germany's

first chancellor to be raised in the former communist east — called the events of Nov. 9, 1989 an "epic" moment in history. "For me, it was one of the happiest moments of my life," Merkel told a crowd of tens of thousands packed around the Brandenburg Gate. In a video message screened at the main event, President Barack Obama paid tribute to the dissidents and demonstrators who ushered in the fall of the wall 20 years ago. "Let us never forget Nov. 9, 1989, nor the sacrifices that made it possible," Obama said to applause and cheers.

Clinton paid tribute Germany and other countries who shook loose communist binds. "We remember the people of the Baltics who joined hands across their land ... we remember the students of Prague who propelled a dissident playwright from a jail cell to the presidency," she said.

Continued on Page B7



Price of a barrel of petroleum
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Lawyer headed to meet Army base shooting suspect



Soldiers from Fort Hood fold a American flag inside Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, Monday, Nov. 9, 2009 in preparation for President Obama's planned visit on Tuesday. Army psychiatrist Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan is suspected of opening fire on fellow soldiers during a rampage that left 13 people dead on Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009.

Associated Press

MIKE BAKER

Associated Press Writer

KILLEEN, Texas (AP) — A lawyer for the Army psychiatrist accused in a deadly shooting spree at Fort Hood, Texas, said Monday he asked investigators not to question his client and expressed doubt that the suspect would be able to get a fair trial, given the widespread attention to the case.

Continued on Page B3



Joshua Fattal



Shane Bauer



Sarah Shourd

This combination of three photos released by freethehikers.org shows from left: Joshua Fattal, Shane Bauer, and Sarah Shourd. A senior Iranian prosecutor said Monday, Nov. 9, 2009 that the three Americans, who were detained on the border with Iraq earlier in July 2009, have been accused of espionage.

Associated Press

Iran accuses 3 detained Americans of espionage

ALI AKBAR DAREINI

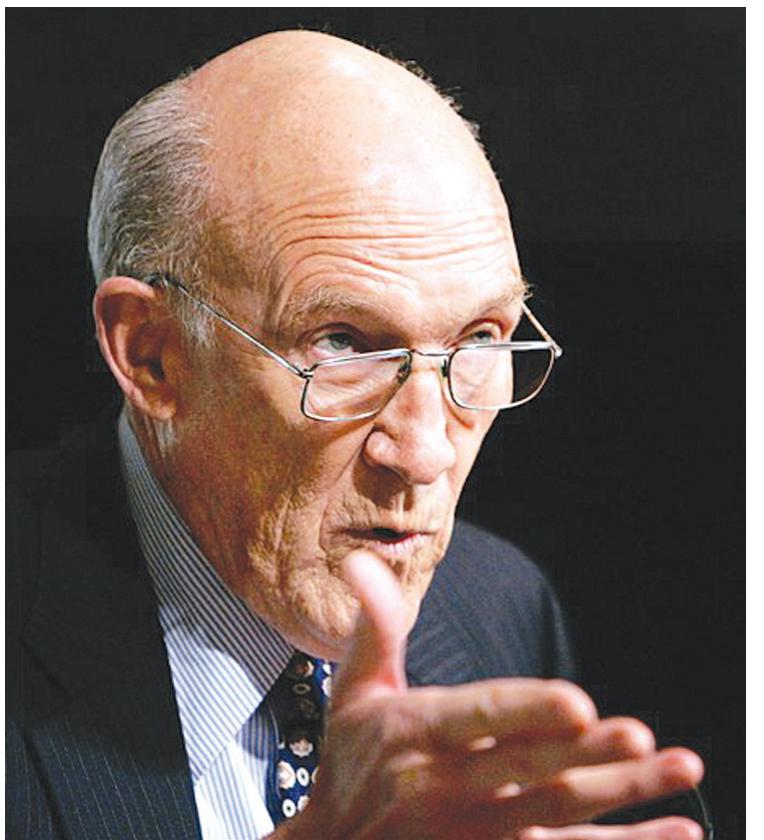
LEE KEATH

Associated Press Writers

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran accused three detained Americans of spying Monday, signaling Tehran intends to put them on trial. It drew a sharp U.S. response that the charges are baseless because the hikers strayed across the border from Iraq.

Continued on Page B6

Supreme Court looks at life sentences for juveniles



This May 4, 2007, file photo shows former U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson delivering a key-note address to Log Cabin Republicans at their annual convention in Denver. The Wyoming Republican served 18 years in the Senate, but as a teenager he pleaded guilty to setting fire to an abandoned building on federal property. For teenagers who committed crimes and received a life in prison sentence without parole Simpson said, "When they get to be 30 or 40 and they been in the clink for 20 years or 30 or 40 and they have learned how to read and how to do things, why not" release them Simpson told to the Associated Press. If a prisoner shows he is not fit to be released, "throw him back in," he said. "That's better than saying 'Sorry, we can't look at that file because you were sent here for life.'"

Associated Press

MARK SHERMAN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A seemingly divided U.S. Supreme Court wrestled Monday with whether teenagers can be locked away forever for their crimes.

The question arose in two cases involving Florida men who are serving life prison terms with no chance of parole for crimes they committed as teenagers. Their lawyers argue that the sentences for people so young are cruel and unusual, in violation of the Constitution, because young people have greater capacity to change.

The U.S. Constitution specifically bans but does not define "cruel and unusual punishment."

Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the Supreme Court opinion four years ago that ruled out the death penalty for people under 18, judging them less responsible than adults. So most eyes were on him Monday as the court considered whether to extend that rationale to life without parole sentences.

But Kennedy offered little hint of his position, at one point suggesting it might be difficult to distinguish between juveniles and adults in cases that do not involve the death penalty.

"Why does a juvenile have a constitutional right to hope, but an adult does not?" he asked.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg provided a possible answer, wondering whether teenagers can be accurately evaluated at the time they are sentenced. It may be possible that only after some years have passed that the state can determine, "Has this person overcome those youthful disabilities?" she said.

On the other side of the issue, Justice Samuel

Alito questioned whether every last juvenile offender had to be given a second chance. "Some of the actual cases in which this sentence has been imposed in Florida involve factual situations that are so horrible that I couldn't have imagined them if I hadn't actually seen them," Alito said, recounting two that involved the rape of children.

In the two cases before the court, Joe Sullivan was sent away for life for raping an elderly woman when he was 13 and Terrance Graham was implicated in armed robberies when he was 16 and 17.

Graham, now 22, and Sullivan, now 34, are in Florida prisons, which hold more than 70 percent of juvenile defendants locked up for life for crimes other than homicide.

The justices could distinguish between the two based on the difference in their ages at the time of the crimes: It could rule that someone as young as Sullivan was must eventually be considered for parole without granting Graham any relief from his sentence.

Sullivan's lawyer, Bryan Stevenson, stated his basic argument simply: "To say to any child of 13 that you are only fit to die in prison is cruel." Sullivan would be resentenced to 40 years in prison if he were to win his case at the high court, he said.

Kennedy's opinion in 2005 was rooted in two principles — that death is different from other punishments and that children are less culpable than adults. Following that ruling, Stevenson noted that juveniles on death row in Florida — all convicted of murder — "got a better sentence than Joe Sullivan," life prison terms with the possibility of parole. □

Case against Ohio bodies suspect expands overseas

THOMAS J. SHEERAN

Associated Press Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) —

Authorities are investigating whether a suspected serial killer whose home and yard harbored the remains of at least 11 people is connected to any killings in places he lived while in the military, including Japan, California and the Carolinas.

The FBI will investigate any leads in the case against Anthony Sowell, 50, who served in the Marines from 1978 to 1985, said Scott Wilson, an FBI spokesman in Cleveland.

FBI behavioral specialists visited the Sowell property during the weekend and will try to develop a profile of the killings that could help determine whether investigations need to be opened or reopened elsewhere, Wilson said.

Sowell was stationed at various

times at South Carolina; North Carolina; Okinawa, Japan; and Camp Pendleton, California.

The city of East Cleveland is also reviewing three unsolved slayings in 1988 and 1989, after Sowell returned there from service in the Marines and before he went to prison for attempted rape, said Sgt. Ken Bolton, a detective for the police department in the Cleveland suburb.

Sowell has been charged in Cleveland with five counts of aggravated murder in connection with the bodies found at the home.

He was indicted Monday on one count of attempted murder, two counts of rape, two counts of kidnapping and two counts of felonious assault in an alleged attack Sept. 22 that led to the search of his home.

Sowell has asked for a court-appointed attorney, but court records don't reflect that one has been chosen.

The FBI will review its national database of unsolved crimes for any clues to possible connections to Sowell, particularly at his military service locations, Wilson said. The first step is to get a detailed timeline of his service, Wilson said.

Police in Coronado, California, near Camp Pendleton, said a woman told them that she saw Sowell's mug shot on TV and was sure he had raped her in 1979.

Officers talked with the woman but were unable to confirm her story because rape investigation records from 30 years ago have been thrown out, said Jesus Ochoa, Coronado police commander. "She seemed credible," he said.

Near Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, Onslow County Sheriff Ed Brown and his deputies are sifting through paper records to check for

any unsolved killings or disappearances during the time Sowell was at the Marine base from May 20, 1978, to July 12, 1978.

Brown said he has already run Sowell's name through computerized court files and hasn't found that Sowell got so much as a traffic ticket while in the area. But the paper search is slow going.

"The computer technology then is not what it is now," Brown said.

Near Parris Island, where Sowell did his initial Marine training, Beaufort County authorities said they were waiting to be told the specific dates Sowell lived in the area before going back over any cases. "Once we have received more concrete information regarding the time frame in question, we will certainly be evaluating any connections to unsolved crimes in our area," said sheriff's Cpl. Robin

McIntosh.

The unsolved East Cleveland slayings of Rosalind Garner on May 27, 1988, Carmella Prater on Feb. 27, 1989, and Mary Thomas on March 28, 1989, will be checked against the autopsies of the bodies found at Sowell's home to check for similarities, Bolton said.

"It's for the family's closure," he said. "They are unsolved and they happened around the time that he was not in jail."

No connections had been made by Monday, he said.

The family of Janice Webb, 48, of Lakewood, who disappeared in June and was reported missing Aug. 2, was notified Monday by police that remains found at the house were the eighth identified as among the victims, said her sister, Joann Moore.

Moore said her sister, who had a son and three grandchildren, had struggled with alcohol and drug addictions. □



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SHOOTING SUSPECT

Continued from Page B1

Retired Col. John P. Galligan said he was contacted Monday by Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan's family and was headed to an Army hospital in San Antonio to meet Hasan.

"Until I meet with him, it's best to say we're just going to protect all of his rights," Galligan said.

Hasan, 39, is accused of opening fire on the Army post on Thursday, killing 13 people and wounding 29 before civilian police shot him in the torso. He was taken into custody and eventually moved to Brooke Army Medical Center, where he was in stable condition Monday and able to talk, hospital spokesman Dewey Mitchell said.

Galligan said he didn't know if Hasan had been medically cleared to talk.

"There's a lot of facts that still need to be developed, and the time for that will come in due course," he said.

Authorities won't say when charges would be filed or if Hasan would face military justice.

Galligan questioned whether Hasan could get a fair trial in either criminal or military court, given President Barack Obama's planned visit to the base on Tuesday and public comments by the post commander, Lt. Gen. Robert Cone.

"You've got his commander in chief showing up tomorrow," Galligan said. "That same kind of publicity naturally creates an issue as to whether you find a fair and impartial forum, whether that's in the military or even if it were in a federal forum."

Authorities say Hasan fired off more than 100 rounds at a soldier processing center.

Fifteen victims remained hospitalized with gunshot wounds, and eight were in intensive care.

Authorities continue to refer to Hasan as the only suspect in the rampage, but they have said they have not determined a motive. A spokesman for Army investigators did not immediately respond to calls and e-mails seeking comment Monday.

A radical American imam living in Yemen who had contact with two Sept. 11, 2001 hijackers praised Hasan as a hero as a hero on his personal Web site Monday.

The posting on the Web site for Anwar al Awlaki, who was a spiritual leader at two mosques where three Sept. 11 hijackers worshipped, said American Muslims who condemned the Fort Hood attack are hypocrites who have committed treason against their religion.

Awlaki said the only way a Muslim can justify serving in the U.S. military is if he intends to "follow in the footsteps of men like Nidal." "Nidal Hassan (sic) is a hero," Awlaki said. "He is a man of conscience who could not bear living the contradiction of being a Muslim and serving in an army that is fighting against his own people."

Two U.S. intelligence officials told The Associated Press



Soldiers salute during the nightly Retreat ceremony on Monday Nov. 9, 2009, at III Corps Headquarters at Fort Hood, Texas, where a memorial service will be held Tuesday for the soldiers killed in last week's mass shootings at Fort Hood.

Associated Press

the Web site was Awlaki's.

They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence collection. Awlaki did not immediately respond to an attempt to contact him through the Web site.

Hasan's family attended the Dar al Hijrah Islamic Center in Falls Church, Virginia, where Awlaki was preaching in 2001. Hasan's mother's funeral was held at the mosque on May 31, 2001, according to her obituary in the Roanoke Times newspaper, around the same time two Sept. 11 hijackers worshipped at the mosque and while Awlaki was

preaching.

The Falls Church mosque is one of the largest on the East Coast, and thousands of worshippers attend prayers and services there every week.

Imam Johari Abdul-Malik, outreach director at Dar al Hijrah, said he did not know whether Hasan ever attended the mosque but confirmed that the Hasan family participated in services there. Abdul-Malik said the Hasans were not leaders at the mosque and their attendance was normal. Fort Hood officials said the country's largest military installation was moving

forward with the business of soldiering. The building where Hasan allegedly opened fire remains a crime scene, but a processing center is scheduled to reopen Thursday in a new, temporary location.

Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur L. Coleman Jr. said Monday that reopening the center is an important step in returning the Army post to normal. Cone said the post stepped up security, including suspending visits by the public, largely to reassure the population that the sprawling base is safe and won't "become a battlefield." □

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Abortion could roil Senate health care debate



Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., talks to journalists before the weekly caucus luncheons on Capitol Hill in Washington Nov. 3, 2009. Liberal groups are hurling a hardball message at moderate Democratic senators to get on the health overhaul bandwagon, or don't count on our help in your re-election. "I have to ask, 'Senator, whose side are you on?'" a restaurant owner from Ralston, Neb., tells the camera in a spot aimed at Nelson and run this summer by the Progressive Change Campaign Committee and Democracy for America.

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Abortion opponents in the Senate are seeking tough restrictions in the health care overhaul bill, a move that could roil a shaky Democratic effort to pass President Barack Obama's signature issue by year's end.

Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., said Monday he could not support a bill unless it clearly prohibits federal dollars from going to pay for abortions.

Nelson is weighing options, including offering an amendment similar to the one passed by the House this weekend.

"I want to make sure something comparable ... is in there," Nelson said.

The House-passed restrictions were the price Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., had to pay to get a health care bill

passed, on a narrow 220-215 vote. But it's prompted an angry backlash from liberals at the core of her party, and some are now threatening to vote against a final bill if the curbs stay in.

Obama said the legislation needs to find a balance.

"I want to make sure that the provision that emerges meets that test — that we are not in some way sneaking in funding for abortions, but, on the other hand, that we're not restricting women's insurance choices," Obama said in an interview with ABC News.

Senate Democrats will need Nelson's vote — and those of at least a half-dozen other abortion opponents in their caucus. They face a grueling debate against Republicans who are unified in their opposition to a sweeping remake of the health care system. It's unclear how the

abortion opponents would line up; the pressure on them will intensify once the legislation is on the floor. An intraparty fight over abortion is the last thing that Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., needs. Reid is already facing a revolt among Democratic moderates over the government-sponsored health plan that liberals want to incorporate in the legislation as a competitor to private insurance companies. Reid, who is himself opposed to abortion, will have to confront the issue directly as he puts together a Democratic bill for floor consideration. The committee-passed Senate versions differ on abortion, but none would go as far as the restrictive amendment passed by the House.

The House bill would bar the new government insurance plan from covering abortions, except in cases of rape, incest

or the life of the mother being in danger. That's the basic rule currently in federal law. It would also prohibit health plans that receive federal subsidies in a new insurance marketplace from offering abortion coverage. Insurers, however, could sell separate coverage for abortion, which individuals would have to purchase entirely with their own money.

At issue is a profound disagreement over how current federal restrictions on abortion funding should apply to what would be a new stream of federal funding to help the uninsured gain coverage.

Abortion opponents have sought to impose the same restrictions that now apply to the federal employee health plan, military health care and Medicaid, the federal-state health program for the poor. Abortion rights supporters say such an approach would threaten women's right to a legal medical procedure already widely covered by private insurance.

The Senate health committee bill is largely silent on abortion, a stance that abortion opponents interpret as permitting coverage by private insurance plans that would receive federal subsidies.

The Senate Finance Committee bill attempts to craft a compromise, as the House unsuccessfully tried to do before this weekend's vote tightened restrictions.

The Finance plan would require insurance carriers to separate federal subsidy moneys from any funds used to provide abortions, and it would prohibit abortion coverage from being included in a minimum

benefits package. It would require that state and regional insurance markets offer one plan that covers abortion, and one plan that does not.

Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont., said he had thought the issue was settled. His panel rejected a number of Republican amendments to toughen abortion language.

Abortion opponents — including U.S. Catholic bishops — disagree. They spurned a somewhat similar approach to Baucus' bill in the House, saying that the approach of keeping federal funds separate amounted to little more than an accounting gimmick.

For now, the liberals are saying they will fight. Abortion rights supporters in the House were circulating a letter to Pelosi, threatening to vote against a final bill that restricts access to abortion coverage. At least 40 lawmakers had signed by early Monday.

"I, along with the other pro-choice members in the House, intend to push very hard to ensure that language is not included in the final conference product," said Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla.

They're likely to have help in the Senate from two Republican women who support abortion rights, Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins of Maine. Collins indicated Monday that she thinks the House went too far.

"I think the Senate Finance Committee did a good job of putting up a firewall that would prevent federal funds from being used for abortion," she said. "Generally, I prefer the Senate approach." □

KEEP ARUBA CLEAN...

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Gulf Coast preps as Ida weakens to tropical storm

MELISSA NELSON

Associated Press Writer

PENSACOLA, Florida (AP) — Some Gulf Coast residents hunkered down at home and in shelters Monday while others ventured outside to watch the approach of a rare late-season tropical storm that brought the potential for high winds, flooding and up to 8 inches (10 centimeters) of rain in some places.

Earlier, heavy rain from Ida triggered flooding and landslides in El Salvador that killed at least 130 people. Near New Orleans, a 70-year-old man was feared drowned Monday when trying to help two fishermen whose boat had broken down in the Mississippi River, said Maj. John Marie, a Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's spokesman. A wave knocked him into the water.

Monday evening, Ida was located about 40 miles (60 km) southeast of the mouth of the Mississippi River and about 125 miles (200 km) south-southwest of Pensacola. It was moving north-northwest near 17 mph (28 kph) and was expected to make land late Monday or early Tuesday. An observation site near the mouth measured a gust at 74 mph.



Jason Rodgers is hit by high surf, rain and wind from Tropical Storm Ida as it approaches the coast at Perdido Pass in Gulf Shores, Ala., Monday, Nov. 9, 2009.

Associated Press

Ida had been the third hurricane of this year's Atlantic season, which ends Dec. 1, but weakened with maximum sustained winds near 70 mph (110 kph). The U.S. National Hurricane Center said it was expected to weaken further before making landfall along the Gulf Coast. Rain was already falling along the coastline and winds had kicked up the surf. Forecasters predicted Ida's storm surge could raise water levels 3 to 5 feet above normal.

Tropical storm warnings were out across Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and

Florida, where governors declared states of emergency.

Florida Gov. Charlie Crist warned that tropical storms can still be deadly. He pointed to Fay, which was blamed for more than a dozen deaths in Florida, Haiti and the Dominican Republic last year.

"That thing was a tropical storm and we lost a lot of our fellow Floridians, so it's important to stay vigilant," Crist said outside the state emergency operations center. "We need to be careful."

Residents elsewhere in the

Southeast braced for heavy rain. In north Georgia, which saw historic flooding in September, forecasters said up to 4 more inches could soak the already-saturated ground.

Two Chevron Corp. workers had to be rescued early Monday from an oil rig about 80 miles (128 kilometers) south of New Orleans that was in danger of toppling as Ida churned up high seas. They were not hurt.

There were no plans for mandatory evacuations, but authorities in some coastal areas opened shelters and

encouraged people near the water or in mobile homes to leave. Many schools closed, and several cruise ships were delayed as the U.S. Coast Guard closed Gulf Coast ports.

In Louisiana and Mississippi, officials were concerned about hundreds of people still living in federally issued trailers and mobile homes after hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

Some residents marveled that they were dealing with a storm at all so late in the season.

"It might have been wishful thinking, but we thought hurricane season was over," said Kelby Linn, a real estate agent in Dauphin Island. "I have jeans on instead of shorts. That's just wrong, but we've experienced it so much, we know it's nothing to fear." □



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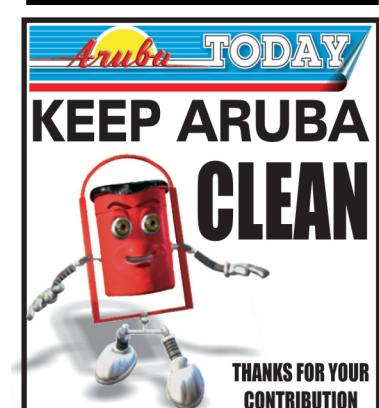
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President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran gestures after a press conference in Istanbul, Turkey, Monday, Nov. 9, 2009. President Ahmadinejad was among heads of state in Istanbul for a one-day meeting of the Organization of The Islamic Conference, a 57-state bloc of Muslim countries that promotes religious solidarity in economic and other matters.

Associated Press

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PG	ASTRO BOY	daily: 4:30 matinee: 12:00	6:45 2:15	late show:	
R	LAW ABIDING CITIZEN	daily: 6:00 matinee: 12:30	8:45 3:15	late show: 11:30	
PG	THIS IS IT MICHAEL JACKSON	daily: 5:45 matinee: 12:45	8:15 3:15	late show: 11:00	
PG-13	COUPLES RETREAT	daily: 5:00 matinee: 12:00	7:30 3:30	10:00 12:15	
PG-13	THE STEPFATHER	daily: 9:15 matinee:		late show: 11:45	

Matinee: sat & sun | Late show: fri & sat

DETAINED AMERICANS

Continued from Page B1

The announcement comes as Washington and Tehran are deadlocked in negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, raising concern that the three could be used as bargaining chips in the talks or to seek the return of Iranians they say are missing.

Relatives and the U.S. government say the three were innocent tourists on an adventure hike in northern Iraq and accidentally crossed into Iran where they were arrested on July 31.

Commenting on the case, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad accused the U.S. of jailing innocent Iranians and pointed to two of his countrymen — a nuclear scientist and a top defense official — who disappeared in recent years. Tehran accuses the U.S. of kidnapping them. The U.S. has refused comment on the two, and there has been speculation they defected to the West.

Ahmadinejad, asked about the spying accusations against the Americans, told reporters in Istanbul, Turkey, said he had no opinion about the case.

"It must be judged by the judiciary, whether they are spies or not," he said. "There are some Iranians who have spent many years in prison

without doing anything wrong, in American prisons."

He said the Americans had crossed the border illegally and Iran has a right to punish them.

"In all countries, crossing borders would have a very heavy sentence, according to the law," he said. "Hopefully, they will have an appropriate answer in the court, and hopefully they will convince the judge that they did not have any intention of crossing the border illegally."

The Americans — Shane Bauer, 27, Sarah Shourd, 31, and Josh Fattal, 27 — have been held in Iran's Evin prison, where Swiss diplomats have visited them twice and said they are healthy.

The three graduates of the University of California at Berkeley had been trekking in Iraq's northern Kurdistan region, their relatives say.

The case recalled that of an American-Iranian journalist, Roxanna Saberi, who was arrested in Iran in January and convicted of espionage. After heavy pressure from the U.S., she was freed on appeal in May and returned home — and several months later, the U.S. military released five Iranians it had held for more than two years.

The accusations against the three Americans could be a

first step in a similar move by Iran to put them on trial and convict them, then arrange their release, aiming to get concessions.

Monday's announcement by Tehran's top prosecutor was the first official word from Iran of espionage allegations against the three. Until now, Iranian officials have only spoken about the Americans in broad terms, saying even after months of questioning that they were still trying to determine why they had entered Iran.

Hoping to prove that they were simply vacationing, the families released videos taken by a friend just two days before their detention, showing the three backpackers dancing and joking in an unfinished cinder block building they came across in Kurdistan's mountains. In one video, Fattal performed an impromptu rap about Iraq.

Bauer and Shourd had been living in Damascus — he studying Arabic, she teaching English — and both had done freelance journalism or writing online. Friends described them as passionate adventurers interested in the Middle East and human rights.

Fattal, who spent three years with a group dedicated to sustainable farming near Cottage Grove, Ore., had been overseas since January as a teaching assistant with the International Honors Program.

The hikers' families declined interview requests Monday by The Associated Press, but issued a statement saying "the allegations that our loved ones may have been engaged in espionage is untrue."

"It is entirely at odds with the people Shane, Sarah and Josh are and with anything that Iran can have learned about them since they were detained on July 31," it said.

It added that the three have been held for more than 100 days "simply because they apparently strayed into Iran by accident while hiking in Iraqi Kurdistan. We again call on Iran to show compassion to our loved ones and release them without delay. This has already gone on for too long." □

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BERLIN WALL**Continued from Page B1**

"And tonight we remember the Germans, and especially the Germans in the East who stood up to say 'No more.'" Merkel also recalled the tragic side of Nov. 9 for Germans — the Nazis' Kristallnacht, or Night of Broken Glass — an anti-Semitic pogrom 71 years ago. At least 91 German Jews were killed, hundreds of synagogues destroyed and thousands of Jewish businesses vandalized and looted in the state-sanctioned riots that night. "Both show that freedom is not self-evident," Merkel said. "Freedom must be fought for. Freedom must be defended time and again." Uwe Kross, a 65-year-old retiree, fought back tears as he recalled watching the drama unfold two decades ago, hours after a confused announcement that East Germany was lifting travel restrictions.

"That night, you couldn't stop people," Kross said. "They

lifted the barrier and everyone poured through. We saw it first on TV, normally it was very quiet up here, but that night we could hear the footsteps of those crossing, tap, tap, tap." Merkel, who was one of thousands to cross that night, recalled that "before the joy of freedom came, many people suffered."

She lauded Gorbachev, with whom she shared an umbrella amid a crush of hundreds, eager for a glimpse of the man many still consider a hero for his role in pushing reform in the Soviet Union.

"You made this possible — you courageously let things happen, and that was much more than we could expect," she said.

Later, Merkel also thanked Germany's neighbors to the east. She welcomed several leaders who dared to stand up for democracy, including Poland's 1980s pro-democracy leader, Lech Walesa, and Miklos Nemeth, Hungary's

last prime minister before communism collapsed. The two men were tapped to push the first domino.

Music from Bon Jovi and Beethoven recalled the joy of the border's opening, which led to German reunification less than a year later and the swift demolition of most of the wall — which snaked for 96 miles around West Berlin, a capitalist enclave deep inside East Germany.

In the decades it stood, 136 people were killed trying to make their way across the border and the wall came to represent the split in ideologies between the communist East and the democratic West.

"This wall divided not only a single country but, as we realize today, all of Europe," Medvedev said, taking his turn in a series of speeches by leaders gathered at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate for the ceremonies.

He said the wall was "destined to fall" amid reforms that



Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, left, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, center, and former Polish President Lech Walesa, right, at the Bornholmer bridge in Berlin, Germany, Monday, Nov. 9, 2009, during the commemorations of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on Nov. 9, 1989.

Associated Press

were gaining momentum in the Communist Soviet Union and other countries in Eastern Europe, which was dominated by Moscow. "The role of the Soviet Union in that period was truly decisive."

By the Brandenburg Gate, which stood in a no man's land behind the wall for nearly three decades, Dieter Mohnka, 74, and his wife Helga, 71, shared a bowl of French fries on Monday afternoon and recalled the night the wall was opened.

"We were shocked when we heard that announced, simply astounded," said Helga. "The next morning we went straight to visit my aunt in the West." Dieter, a high school teacher at the time, said he had long been fascinated with West Germany.

"I was born in East Germany, I went to school in East Germany. I was supposed to teach the kids about the wonderfulness of the East, when I was secretly watching TV from the West," he said □

Palestinian negotiator: 'Defining moment' is here

U.S. Middle East Envoy George Mitchell, right, seen with chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat ahead of a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the residence of the Palestinian ambassador in Amman, Jordan, Monday Nov. 2, 2009.

Associated Press

state. Erekat said that plan has failed because "18 years of negotiations since the two-state solution was raised have gone nowhere."

"We have reached our defining moment," he said. "We are still trying to convince the Israelis to stop (West Bank) settlement activities" and accept a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and if progress is not made, "we will have to take other steps." He would not elaborate. But he denied calling for dissolving the Palestinian Authority. "I didn't say that.

Nobody said that," he told The Associated Press in a telephone interview late Monday.

He spoke as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was about to meet President Barack Obama in Washington.

Palestinian officials have been expressing extreme frustration at the stalled peace negotiations, blaming Israel and calling on the U.S. to exert pressure.

Several officials have been quoted in recent days as calling for dissolution of the Palestinian Authority, but that would leave a power vacuum that could be filled only by Israel or Hamas. Instead, the idea is seen as a way to press Israel and the United States to take steps toward a peace accord.

Palestinian reformer Mustafa Barghouti, who served once as a Cabinet minister, dismissed talk of dissolving the government. "That would be a mistake," he told the AP. "What should happen is that we should defy the Israeli rules and regulations." □

MARK LAVIE**Associated Press Writer**

JERUSALEM (AP) — The chief Palestinian negotiator on Monday warned Israel that if it does not take peacemaking seriously, it will find itself dealing with the militant Hamas instead of moderates like him.

Negotiator Saeb Erekat and other Palestinian officials have been quoted as recommending dismantling the Palestinian Authority, set up in interim accords with Israel to prepare for creation of a Palestinian

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Somali pirates hit oil tanker in long-range attack



Two, blue overalls, of the seven suspected Somali pirates are guarded by Kenyan security officers as they arrived at the port's police station in Mombasa, Kenya, Monday Nov. 9, 2009. The seven suspected pirates arrived at the port of Mombasa on board a German frigate MV Karlsruhe after they were arrested in Indian Ocean waters as they attempted to hijack a French fishing vessel. EU Naval Force said that seven pirates its forces arrested after an attack late last month on a French fishing vessel had been transferred to Kenyan authority for prosecution "in accordance with the agreement between the EU and Kenya."

Associated Press

JASON STRAZIUSO,
Associated Press Writer

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Somali pirates attacked an oil tanker and fired automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades Monday farther out at sea than any previous assault, suggesting that pirate capabilities are growing as they increase activity off East Africa.

Pirates in two skiffs fired at the Hong Kong-flagged BW Lion about 1,000 miles east of the Somali coast, the European Union Naval Force said.

The tanker's captain increased speed and took evasive maneuvers, avoiding the attack, the force said. No casualties were reported. The naval force sent a plane from the Seychelles islands to investigate.

Pirates have launched increasingly bold attacks against vessels in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden in hopes of capturing a ship and crew and collecting ransom. They currently hold more than 190 hostages, including a British couple seized from their personal yacht late last month.

The high-seas hijackings have increased after the recent end of the monsoon season despite an international armada of warships deployed by the United States, the European Union, NATO, Japan, South Korea and China to patrol the region. U.S. drones launched from nearby Seychelles are also patrolling for pirates.

Cmdr. John Harbour, a spokesman for the EU's anti-piracy force, said it wasn't immediately known whether the two skiffs Monday had launched attacks from a larger mothership. He said the work by international navies had pushed pirates out to sea.

"The international transit corridor near the coast is becoming safer, but the pirates are taking fairly drastic action, carrying out attacks so far off the coast," Harbour said. "Certainly our success to date has pushed the pirates out from their normal hunting grounds." Spain on Monday raised the possibility of sending two captured Somali pirates back home after trying them in Madrid — as a way to win the release of a Spanish trawler held by fellow brigands off the Horn of Africa.

Pirates seized the ship Alakrana and its 36-member crew in the Indian Ocean Oct. 2, and besides a ransom they are demanding the release of two colleagues who were caught the next day by Spanish naval forces. Among the 36 hostages are 16 Spaniards, eight Indonesians, and 12 crew from five African countries.

Justice Minister Francisco Caamano told reporters that Spain would have to try the two in Madrid on kidnapping and other charges "and then see if there is some kind of international agreement" allowing them to serve their sentence in Somalia.

Judge Baltasar Garzon, who ordered the two pirates brought to Madrid, said: "I think there are legal avenues to resolve this conflict. I sincerely think it can be done."

Garzon declined to go into detail. Such a decision would not be up to him, but rather his superiors at the National Court. He insisted, however, that Spain cannot yield to the

hijackers and simply free the two men held in Madrid.

Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, speaking during a visit to Poland, declined to confirm or deny that Spain is considering trying the two and then sending them home to serve their sentence. Zapatero said the situation is too delicate for him to comment on in detail, saying anything he says publicly will eventually reach the hijackers. But he did say, "the situation may be on the right track."

At a meeting Sunday in Nairobi between Spain's ambassador to Kenya and Somalia's prime minister, Spain committed to initiating legal procedures to transfer the two pirates to Somalia, according to a statement from the Somali government.

Prime Minister Omar Abdurashid Sharmarke "is convinced that this course of action will lead to a quick resolution of this issue," the statement said. None of the Spanish officials who spoke Monday went so far as to say Spain had made such a pledge.

The Alakrana's skipper, Ricardo Blach, said in comments carried Monday in the newspaper El Pais that conditions on the ship after 40 days of captivity are hellish. Blach said the heavily armed pirates number around 30 and are constantly high on qat, a mild stimulant plant, and open fire in the air to scare the sailors and keep them from sleeping.

"They spit in our faces. They kick us," Blach told the newspaper.

The pirates took three sailors ashore Thursday to increase pressure for a settlement, but the Spanish Foreign Ministry insisted Monday they have been taken back aboard the Alakrana, despite reports from the region that they were still ashore.

Meanwhile, the EU Naval Force said that seven pirates its forces arrested after an attack late last month on a French fishing vessel had been transferred to Kenyan authority for prosecution "in accordance with the agreement between the EU and Kenya." □

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Brazil college backs down on mini-dress expulsion

TALES AZZONI

Associated Press Writer

SAO PAULO (AP) — A Brazilian woman whose short, pink dress caused a near riot at a private college and led to her expulsion will be allowed to return to class.

The private Bandeirante University backed down Monday on its decision to expel 20-year-old Geisy Arruda following a flood of negative reaction in a nation where skimpy attire is common. Videos of students ridiculing her and making catcalls Oct. 22 made her an Internet sensation.

Just hours after the Brazilian government sought an explanation from the university, its dean released a note saying he was reversing the school's decision to expel Arruda.

The Education Ministry had given the university 10 days to clarify its reasoning for kicking out Arruda, who had to put on a professor's white coat and was escorted away by police amid a

hail of insults and curses from other students.

A video of the incident was posted on YouTube and quickly made headlines across Brazil. The university's decision to expel the student Sunday prompted complaints from the national student union and the country's minister in charge of women's policy, among others.

Sao Paulo state prosecutors had said they would investigate what led to the university's decision to expel Arruda, and the student later told reporters through her lawyer that she was going to sue the teaching institution in hopes she could finish the semester there.

The dean's note gave no reasons for why the decision was being overturned.

Arruda and her lawyer could not be reached immediately for comment on the school's reversal.

Although Brazil is known for revealing clothing—especially in beach cities, where many

bikinis are referred to locally as "dental floss" — most college students dress more modestly on campus, commonly in jeans and T-shirts.

The university published newspaper advertisements Sunday saying it expelled Arruda for disrespecting "ethical principles, academic dignity and morality."

The ads also alleged Arruda acted in a provocative manner incompatible with the university environment.

University lawyer Decio Lencioni told Globo TV that the institution was only following its rules.

"The problem is not her clothes; it's her behavior, her attitude," he said.

Lencioni and the university said Arruda even raised her dress and stopped to pose for photos the night she wore the short dress on campus. He said she also chose the longest way to get to class to attract the attention of more students.

In Sunday's ads, titled

"Educational Responsibility," the college said it had previously warned Arruda to change her behavior and decided to expel her after talking to students, staff and Arruda herself.

Arruda, who was studying tourism, said she was disheartened by the decision.

"It's a great injustice," she told Globo TV. "I always dressed in a way that makes me feel good and that doesn't offend anybody. I was always like that and was never reprimanded by anybody."

Civil police in the city of Sao Bernardo do Campo, where the university is located, said they will investigate the students accused of heckling Arruda. The university said it would temporarily suspend some of them.

Brazil's national student union, the Brazilian BAR Association, and several other institutions condemned Arruda's expulsion. Brazil's minister for women's policy, Nilcea Freire, told the official Agencia Brasil



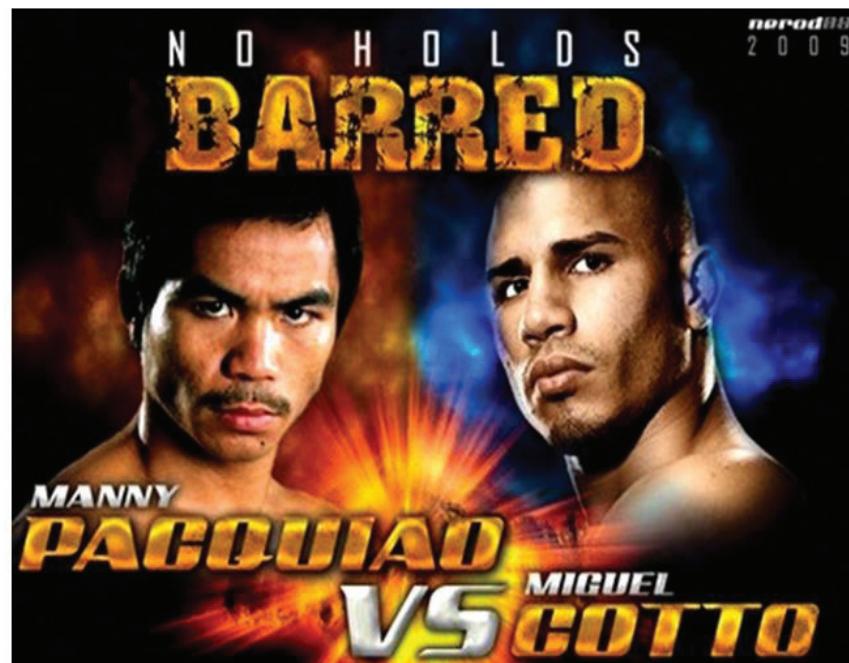
In this photo taken on Saturday, Nov. 7, 2009, student Geisy Arruda poses at her home in Sao Paulo wearing the same dress that she was expelled for wearing on campus at Bandeirante University in Sao Bernardo do Campo, Brazil. The Brazilian government sought an explanation Monday from the private university that expelled Arruda for wearing the dress to class.

Associated Press

news service Sunday that the decision showed "intolerance and discrimination." □

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ARUBA

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Chiefs release RB Larry Johnson

By DOUG TUCKER, AP Sports Writer Doug Tucker, AP Sports Writer – 16 mins ago KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Given good blocking and a fresh start, Larry Johnson might still be the power-running Pro Bowler who had back-to-back 1,700-yard seasons for Kansas City.

Are you listening, Seattle? What do you think, Indianapolis? Chicago? Houston?

Or he might be a declining malcontent who'll only cost money and cause trouble.

To that, every coach and general manager in the NFL is listening. The Chiefs released Johnson on Monday, the day he was due back from his second suspension in the past 12 months.

Any team with a faltering running game is bound to be tempted by Johnson, despite his baggage and his age (he turns 30 on Nov. 19).

"Any player that's available, we look at," said Bears coach Lovie Smith. "That's been our standard policy throughout. That'll be the case with Larry."

Houston coach Gary Kubiak agreed. "When a name like that comes on the free agent market like today, we'll obviously go back and take a look at him just like any other player," Kubiak said. "Obviously, he's been a good player in this league and I'm sure he'll get a lot of interest from a lot of people."

The Seahawks have the league's 30th-ranked rushing offense. Starter Julius Jones has sputtered. And last week, Seattle released ineffective backup Edgerrin James, the NFL's active rushing leader. Yet coach Jim Mora doesn't sound interested in Johnson. When asked if he was interested in adding a veteran running back, Mora said "No. ... Right now, we'll just stick with what we've got."



This is an Oct. 18, 2009, file photo showing Kansas City Chiefs running back Larry Johnson carrying the ball during an NFL football game against the Washington Redskins, in Landover, Md. The Chiefs have released troubled running back Larry Johnson. A two-paragraph statement from the team Monday, Nov. 9, 2009, simply listed Johnson's statistics and announced his release.

Johnson has been high-maintenance since the Chiefs drafted him in the first round out of Penn State in 2003. Unhappy because he thought he was going to be taken by the Pittsburgh Steelers, Johnson brooded while playing behind Pro Bowler Priest Holmes. He even prompted then-coach Dick Vermeil to say it was time for him "to take the diapers off." His last brush with controversy came two weeks ago when he posted on his Twitter account a gay slur, insulted followers and questioned the competence of head coach Todd Haley.

He was suspended for two weeks, but Haley said the final decision to cast him aside was not made until early Monday. "We decided it was in the best interests of the Kansas City Chiefs organization to move forward at this time," he said. Behind a poor offensive line this year, Johnson has gained 2.7 yards per carry for the Chiefs (1-7) and appeared

not to have the quickness and punishing power that enabled him to rush for more than 1,700 yards in Pro Bowl seasons in 2005 and '06. Can he still be effective?

"I don't think I'll answer that because he's no longer on this team," Haley said. Since rushing for a team-record 1,789 yards on an NFL-record 416 carries in 2006, Johnson has never been quite the same.

In 2008, then-coach Herm Edwards benched him for three straight games for violating team rules and NFL commissioner Roger Goodell suspended him a fourth game for violating the league's player-conduct policy. Johnson was later sentenced to two years' probation after pleading guilty to two counts of disturbing the peace. One woman accused him of throwing a drink on her and another said he had pushed her head at a Kansas City night spot.

Associated Press

After his huge year in 2006, Johnson stayed away from training camp, demanding more money and he got it, a six-year deal worth \$45 million, including \$19 million guaranteed.

But hampered by a foot injury, he wound up with only 559 yards and three touchdowns. In 2008, he ran for 874 yards as the Chiefs sank to 2-14. Still, Johnson was only 75 yards away from breaking Holmes' team rushing record. "A part of him is excited and a part of him is very regretful," his agent, Peter Schaffer, told The Associated Press.

"There's a lot of feelings going on right now. It's analogous to breaking up with a girlfriend. Maybe you saw it coming, but it still hurts when it happens." Haley declined to say if Johnson's low production had any bearing on his release or whether the Chiefs' biggest concern were the slurs and the public criticism of his coach. □



Edmonton Oilers center Ryan Potulny, front, celebrates scoring a goal as he returns to the team box against the Colorado Avalanche in the third period of the Oilers' 5-3 victory in an NHL hockey game in Denver on Sunday, Nov. 8, 2009.

Associated Press

NHL Roundup

Edmonton hand Avalanche first home loss

DENVER, (AP) — Ryan Potulny and Dustin Penner scored two of Edmonton's four power-play goals as the Oilers won 5-3 on Sunday, handing the Colorado Avalanche their first home loss of the season. Patrick O'Sullivan and Tom Gilbert added power-play goals, Andrew Cogliano scored, and Nikolai Khabibulin made 34 saves to help Edmonton end a three-game losing streak. The Oilers were 4 for 7 on the power play. Marek Svatos, T.J. Hensick and David Jones scored for Colorado, and Craig Anderson made 27 saves. The Avalanche, tied for NHL lead with San Jose with 26 points, opened the season with six straight home wins.

Thrashers 3, Blues 2, SO

At Atlanta, defensemen Tobias Enstrom and Ron Hainsey forced overtime with third-period goals, and Rich Peverley and Slava Kozlov scored in the shootout to help the Thrashers end a four-game home losing streak. □

Lawyer headed to meet Army base shooting suspect

MIKE BAKER

Associated Press Writer

KILLEEN, Texas (AP) — A lawyer for the Army psychiatrist accused in a deadly shooting spree at Fort Hood, Texas, said Monday he asked investigators not to question his client and expressed doubt that the suspect would be able to get a fair trial, given the widespread attention to the case.

Retired Col. John P. Galligan said he was contacted Monday by Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan's family and was headed to an Army hospital in San Antonio to meet Hasan.

"Until I meet with him, it's best to say we're just going to protect all of his rights," Galligan said.

Hasan, 39, is accused of opening fire on the Army post on Thursday, killing 13 people and wounding 29 before civilian police shot him in the torso. He was taken into custody and eventually moved to Brooke Army Medical Center, where he was in stable condition Monday and able to talk, hospital spokesman Dewey Mitchell said.

Galligan said he didn't know if Hasan had been medically cleared to talk.

"There's a lot of facts that still need to be developed, and the time for that will come in due course," he said.

Authorities won't say when charges would be filed or if Hasan would face military justice.

Galligan questioned whether Hasan could get a fair trial in either criminal or military court, given President Barack Obama's planned visit to the base on Tuesday and public comments by the post commander, Lt. Gen. Robert Cone.

"You've go this commander in chief showing up tomorrow," Galligan said. "That same kind of publicity naturally creates an issue as to whether you find a fair and impartial forum, whether that's in the military or even if it were in a federal forum."

Authorities say Hasan fired

off more than 100 rounds at a soldier processing center. Fifteen victims remained hospitalized with gunshot wounds, and eight were in intensive care.

Authorities continue to refer to Hasan as the only suspect in the rampage, but they have said they have not determined a motive. A spokesman for Army investigators did not immediately respond to calls and e-mails seeking comment Monday.

A radical American imam living in Yemen who had contact with two Sept. 11, 2001 hijackers praised Hasan as a hero as a hero on his personal Web site Monday.

The posting on the Web site for Anwar al Awlaki, who was a spiritual leader at two mosques where three Sept. 11 hijackers worshipped, said American Muslims who condemned the Fort Hood attack are hypocrites who have committed treason against their religion.

Awlaki said the only way a Muslim can justify serving in the U.S. military is if he intends to "follow in the footsteps of men like Nidal." "Nidal Hassan (sic) is a hero," Awlaki said. "He is a man of conscience who could not bear living the contradiction of being a Muslim and serving in an army that is fighting against his own people."

Two U.S. intelligence officials

told The Associated Press the Web site was Awlaki's. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence collection. Awlaki did not immediately respond to an attempt to contact him through the Web site.

Hasan's family attended the Dar al Hijrah Islamic Center in Falls Church, Virginia, where Awlaki was preaching in 2001. Hasan's mother's funeral was held at the mosque on May 31, 2001, according to her obituary in the Roanoke Times newspaper, around the same time two Sept. 11 hijackers worshipped at the mosque and while Awlaki was preaching.

The Falls Church mosque is one of the largest on the East Coast, and thousands of worshippers attend prayers and services there every week.

Imam Johari Abdul-Malik, outreach director at Dar al Hijrah, said he did not know whether Hasan ever attended the mosque but confirmed that the Hasan family participated in services there. Abdul-Malik said the Hasans were not leaders at the mosque and their attendance was normal. Fort Hood officials said the country's largest military installation was moving forward with the business of soldiering. The building where Hasan allegedly



Soldiers from Fort Hood fold an American flag inside Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, Monday, Nov. 9, 2009 in preparation for President Obama's planned visit on Tuesday. Army psychiatrist Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan is suspected of opening fire on fellow soldiers during a rampage that left 13 people dead on Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009.

Associated Press

opened fire remains a crime scene, but a processing center is scheduled to reopen Thursday in a new, temporary location. Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur L. Coleman Jr. said Monday that reopening the center is an important step

in returning the Army post to normal. Cone said the post stepped up security, including suspending visits by the public, largely to reassure the population that the sprawling base is safe and won't "become a battlefield." □

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NBA Roundup**Suns shine, beat Wizards 102-90**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jason Richardson scored 22 points and Steve Nash had 17 assists as the Phoenix Suns maintained their dominance of the Washington Wizards with a 102-90 victory Sunday.

The Suns never trailed in the second half as they beat the Wizards for the sixth straight time. Washington last defeated Phoenix nearly three years ago.

Phoenix improved to six wins and a loss, matching the best seven-game start in franchise history. The Wizards have lost four straight.

Pistons 88, 76ers 81

At Auburn Hills, Ben Gordon scored 23 points and Ben Wallace added 16 rebounds for the Pistons, who held Philadelphia without a field goal for the last six minutes. Wallace had seven of Detroit's 21 offensive rebounds, and added three blocks and three steals. Charlie Villanueva added 16 points.

Andre Iguodala led Philadelphia with 24 points. At Oklahoma City, Kevin Durant scored 28 points,



Phoenix Suns' Steve Nash, right, and teammate Jason Richardson (23) celebrate during the second half of their 110-103 win over the Boston Celtics in an NBA basketball game in Boston, Friday, Nov. 6, 2009.

Associated Press

Russell Westbrook added 17 points and 10 assists as the Thunder took it away from the Magic.

Orlando played for the fourth

time this season without Vince Carter and Rashard Lewis, and also added Ryan Anderson to the injured list. The Magic seemed to run out of gas after

a strong start.

Oklahoma City scored the first eight points after half time, and then added a 9-0 spurt shortly thereafter to push its lead to 72-49 on Nick Collison's basket in the lane midway through the third period.

Dwight Howard led the Magic with 20 points.

Lakers 104, Hornets 88

At Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 28 points, Shannon Brown added 15 and the Lakers thrived again without their top two big men.

DJ Mbenga had 10 points and 12 rebounds for the defending NBA champions, who easily won their fifth straight game and their second in a row without injured center Andrew Bynum and forward Pau Gasol.

In other NBA games it was, Phoenix 102, Washington 90; Detroit 88, Philadelphia 81; Oklahoma City 102, Orlando 74; Sacramento 120, Golden State 107; Portland 116, Minnesota 93; and L.A. Lakers 104, New Orleans 88. □

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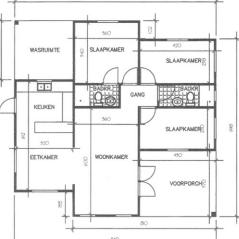
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Chávez buscaría tapar crisis de Venezuela con Colombia

BOGOTÁ (Reuters) - Con el aumento de la tensión diplomática entre Venezuela y Colombia, el presidente Hugo Chávez pretende disipar una crisis interna, pero a la par y empujado por vientos de guerra fría, beneficiaría a su homólogo Alvaro Uribe en una eventual carrera a su segunda reelección.

Chávez, el más fuerte crítico de Estados Unidos en América Latina, intensificó sus declaraciones contra Washington y Bogotá por la decisión de Uribe de dar acceso a siete bases militares de su país a personal estadounidense para desarrollar operaciones contra el narcotráfico y el terrorismo.

El mandatario izquierdista sostiene que, en Colombia, Estados Unidos tiene una plataforma para invadir su país y bloquear su revolución bolivariana a favor de los más pobres.

Desde julio el gobernante venezolano no ha cesado en sus ataques contra el Gobierno del presidente Barack Obama, al que acusa de "imperialista", ni contra el de Colombia al que califica de "lacayo del imperio".

El más reciente episodio fue el fin de semana cuando Chávez llamó a sus militares a prepararse para la guerra, mientras que Colombia calificó sus palabras como "amenazas" y anunció que llevará el caso a Naciones Unidas (ONU) y a la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA).

"Ha buscado este procedimiento, como acostumbran mucho los autócratas, para tratar de tapar lo que ocurre a su interior y tratar de conseguir la solidaridad de su pueblo por esta vía", dijo a Reuters el ex canciller colombiano Augusto Ramírez.

El experto recordó que Venezuela afronta problemas en el suministro de agua y



Miembros de la Guardia Nacional de Venezuela vigilan la frontera con Colombia en San Antonio, 3 nov 2009. REUTERS/Jorge Silva

de electricidad; una inflación acumulada en lo que va del año de más de un 20 por ciento e índices de inseguridad que no ceden, mientras que la popularidad de Chávez bajó a un 46,2 por ciento según la firma Datánálisis.

URIBE CAUTELOSO, TAMBIEN GANA

Ramírez aseguró que los vientos de guerra desatados por Chávez también pueden beneficiar a Uribe después de que su popularidad descendió a un 64 por ciento, su más bajo nivel en más de 7 años, mientras le coquetea a la posibilidad de una segunda reelección consecutiva en el 2010 si es habilitado.

"A los dos puede beneficiarlos. Los países en un momento de confrontación externa obviamente se unen en torno de los gobernantes", opinó el ex canciller colombiano.

Más allá de los problemas y cálculos internos, el escalamiento de la tensión también amenaza con establecer y revivir la guerra fría en la región. Mientras que Colombia es el más importante aliado de Estados

Unidos en América Latina, Venezuela intensificó sus relaciones militares, políticas y comerciales con Rusia, Irán y Siria, antagonistas de Washington.

Chávez, quien saltó a la fama en 1992 cuando lideró un fallido golpe de Estado, compró en los últimos años más de 3.000 millones de dólares en aviones, helicópteros, tanques, fusiles y radares, para supuestamente defenderse de la amenaza de invasión de Estados Unidos. Excomandante de las Fuerzas Militares de Colombia general Manuel José Bonnet calificó

como "una bravuconada" las amenazas de Chávez.

"Venezuela está viviendo una de las situaciones más difíciles que haya vivido en su historia. Imagínese una potencia energética sin agua, sin energía eléctrica y sin alimentos, con una inseguridad insostenible. ¿Qué cantidad de culpa tienen en esta situación Obama y Colombia?", preguntó.

"Esta tratando de desviar la atención interna de Venezuela hacia Colombia y Estados Unidos para disimular los tremundos problemas

sociales, económicos y de seguridad que tiene al interior y los venezolanos no le están comiendo cuento", dijo.

Bonnet aseguró que pese a la carrera armamentista que inició Venezuela en los últimos años, Colombia es capaz de neutralizar una eventual agresión bélica aunque no ha comprado armas a gran escala como lo ha hecho el Gobierno de Chávez.

"Si estamos preparados y tenemos un plan de movilización, tenemos experiencia infinitamente mayor a la de ellos, tenemos unas organizaciones de comunicaciones, de comando y control probadas en el combate permanentemente. Estamos muy preparados", aseguró el militar retirado quien en la actualidad es un reconocido catedrático universitario.

El analista venezolano Teodoro Petkoff coincidió que en Chávez busca incrementar la tensión con Colombia como una táctica para sofocar la crisis interna.

"Se trata de una táctica dirigida a incrementar la tensión (...) para tratar de unir al país y a su propia base que siente que se le escurre entre las manos por la crisis eléctrica, del agua, de inseguridad", afirmó Petkoff a una radio colombiana. □

Morales respalda llamado militar de Hugo Chávez

LA PAZ (AP) - El presidente Evo Morales respaldó a su par venezolano Hugo Chávez quien llamó a los militares de su país a prepararse para la guerra en referencia a la creciente tensión con la vecina Colombia y anticipó que pedirá una reunión de emergencia de los países del ALBA.

"Es obligación de cualquier presidente defender la dignidad y la soberanía de su territorio, eso es constitucional", dijo Morales en rueda de prensa el lunes en la ciudad de Cochabamba en el centro de Bolivia.

"Yo llego a la conclusión que es una anexión de Colombia a Estados Unidos. Colombia es una base militar de Estados Unidos", dijo Morales y agregó que se trata de "una abierta provocación a los países que empiezan a dignificar a sus pueblos y a gobiernos revolucionarios". "Lo que es Guantánamo

para Cuba; Colombia es para Venezuela, Nicaragua, Ecuador y Bolivia. Ahora hay otro Guantánamo", sostuvo.

Al mismo tiempo, pidió derrotar --en las elecciones de mayo del 2010-- a los partidos y líderes colombianos que respaldan el uso de bases militares de ese país por tropas de Estados Unidos.

"Es mejor que antes de llegar a conflictos y agresiones (las organizaciones políticas) sean derrotados democráticamente en Colombia, aunque me digan que es una intromisión, pero (estoy) obligado a defender la soberanía de los pueblos de Latinoamérica", apuntó Morales. Morales atribuyó la creciente tensión entre Venezuela y Colombia a la decisión del presidente Alvaro Uribe de aceptar el uso de bases militares de su país por parte de Estados Unidos. □

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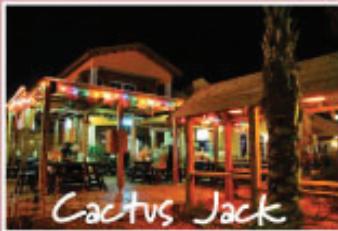


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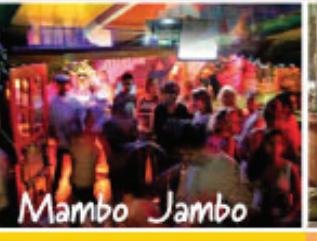
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